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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THIS is a literary sample-book. These chapters are merely pieces cut out of the fabric to show the quality of the material. They are neither better nor poorer than a hundred other chapters by the same and other authors in the series. Each one, however, is, in a sense, a complete story which in itself may afford the reader some enjoyment. By a slight exercise of the imagination, the reader may from these fragments judge the excellence of the whole work, and form an idea of how greatly it will profit him to have at his hand, for either continuous or occasional reading, the complete history of the Canadian people which the work provides, vividly written, carefully edited, and generously furnished with maps and illustrations. The plan of the series, with a full list of titles and authors, will be found at the end.

THE MEMORABLE EXPLOITS OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN

THE TRAGEDY OF FRANKLIN'S FATE

FROM

ADVENTURERS OF THE FAR NORTH

BY

STEPHEN LEACOCK

CE LIVRE N'APPARTIENT PLUS AUX ARCHIVES DE LA PROVINCE

ARCHIVES DE LA Province de Québec

CHAPTER IV

THE MEMORABLE EXPLOITS OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN

THE generation now passing away can vividly recall, as one of the deepest impressions of its childhood, the profound and sustained interest excited by the mysterious fate of Sir John Franklin. His splendid record by sea and land, the fact that he was one of 'Nelson's men' and had fought at Copenhagen and Trafalgar, his feats as an explorer in the unknown wilds of North America and the torrid seas of Australasia, and, more than these, his high Christian courage and his devotion to the flag and country that he served—all had made of Franklin a hero whom the nation delighted to honour. His departure in 1846 with his two stout ships the *Erebus* and the *Terror* and a total company of one hundred and thirty-four men, including some of the ablest naval officers of the day, was hailed with high hopes that the mysterious north would at length be

robbed of its secret. Then, as the years passed and the ships never returned, and no message from the explorers came out of the silent north, the nation, defiant of difficulty and danger, bent its energies towards the discovery of their fate. No less than forty-two expeditions were sent out in search of the missing ships. The efforts of the government were seconded by the munificence of private individuals, and by the generosity of naval officers who gladly gave their services for no other reward than the honour of the enterprise. The energies of the rescue parties were quickened by the devotion of Lady Franklin, who refused to abandon hope, and consecrated her every energy and her entire fortune to the search for her lost husband. Her conduct and her ardent appeals awoke a chivalrous spirit at home and abroad; men such as Kane, Bellot, M'Clintock and De Haven volunteered their services in the cause. At length, as with the passage of years anxiety deepened into despair, and as little by little it was learned that all were lost, the brave story of the death of Franklin and his men wrote itself in imperishable letters on the hearts of their fellow-countrymen. It found no parallel till more than half a century later, when another and a

similar tragedy in the silent snows of the Antarctic called forth again the mingled pride and anguish with which Britain honours the memory of those fallen in her cause.

John Franklin belonged to the school of naval officers trained in the prolonged struggle of the great war with France. He entered the Royal Navy in 1800 at fourteen years of age, and within a year was engaged on his ship, the *Polyphemus*, in the great sea-fight at Copenhagen. During the brief truce that broke the long war after 1801, Franklin served under Flinders, the great explorer of the Australasian seas. On his way home in 1803 he was shipwrecked in Torres Strait, and, with ninety-three others of the company of H.M.S. *Porpoise*, was cast up on a sandbar, seven hundred and fifty miles from the nearest port. The party were rescued, Franklin reached England, and at once set out on a voyage to the China seas in the service of the East India Company. During the voyage the merchant fleet with which he sailed offered battle to a squadron of French men-of-war, which fled before them. The next year saw Franklin serving as signal midshipman on board the *Bellerophon* at Trafalgar. He remained in active service during the war, served in America, and was

wounded in the British attempt to capture New Orleans. After the war Franklin, now a lieutenant, found himself, like so many other naval officers, unable, after the stirring life of the past fifteen years, to settle into the dull routine of peace service. Maritime discovery, especially since his voyage with Flinders, had always fascinated his mind, and he now offered himself for service in that Arctic region with which his name will ever be associated.

The long struggle of the war had halted the progress of discoveries in the northern seas. But on the conclusion of peace the attention of the nation, and of naval men in particular, was turned again towards the north. The Admiralty naturally sought an opportunity of giving honourable service to their officers and men. Great numbers of them had been thrown out of employment. Some migrated to the colonies or even took service abroad. At the same time the writings of Captain Scoresby, a whaling captain of scientific knowledge who published an account of the Greenland seas, and the influence of such men as Sir John Barrow, the secretary of the Admiralty, did much to create a renewal of public interest in the north. It was now recognized that the North-West Passage offered no commercial

attractions. But it was felt that it would not be for the honour of the nation that the splendid discoveries of Hearne, Cook and Mackenzie should remain uncompleted. To trace the Arctic water-way from the Atlantic to the Pacific became now a supreme object, not of commercial interest, but of geographical research and of national pride. To this was added the fact that the progress of physical and natural science was opening up new fields of investigation for the explorers of the north.

Franklin first sailed north in 1818, as second in command of the first Arctic expedition of the nineteenth century. Two brigs, H.M.S. *Dorothea* under Captain Buchan, and H.M.S. *Trent* under Lieutenant John Franklin, set out from the Thames with a purpose which in audacity at least has never been surpassed. The new sentiment of supreme confidence in the navy inspired by the conquest of the seas is evinced by the fact that these two square-rigged sailing ships, clumsy and antiquated, built up with sundry extra beams inside and iron bands without, were directed to sail straight north across the North Pole and down the world on the other side. They did their best. They went churning northward through the foaming seas, and when they found that

the ice was closing in on them, and that they were being blown down upon it in a gale as on to a lee shore, the order was given to put the helm up and charge full speed at the ice. It was the only possible way of escape, and it meant either sudden and awful death under the ice floes or else the piling up of the ships safe on top of them—'taking the ice' as Arctic sailors call it. The *Dorothea* and the *Trent* went driving at the ice with such a gale of snow about them that neither could see the other as they ran. They 'took the ice' with a mighty crash, amid a wild confusion of the elements, and when the storm cleared the two old hulls lay shattered but safe on the surface of the ice-pack. The whole larboard side of the *Dorothea* was smashed, but they brought her somehow to Spitzbergen, and there by wonderful patching enabled her to sail home.

The next year (1819) Lieutenant Franklin was off again on an Arctic journey, the record of which, written by himself, forms one of the most exciting stories of adventure ever written. The design this time was to follow the lead of Hearne and Mackenzie. Beginning where their labours ended, Franklin proposed to embark on the polar sea in canoes and follow the coast line. Franklin left England at the

end of May. He was accompanied by Dr Richardson, a naval surgeon, afterwards Sir John Richardson, and second only to Franklin himself as an explorer and writer, Midshipman Back, later on to be Admiral Sir George Back, Midshipman Hood, and one Hepburn, a stout-hearted sailor of the Royal Navy. They sailed in the Hudson's Bay Company ship *Prince of Wales*, and passed through the straits to York Factory. Thence by canoe they went inland, up the Hayes river, through Lake Winnipeg and thence up the Saskatchewan to Cumberland House, a Hudson's Bay fort established by Samuel Hearne a few years after his famous journey. From York Factory to Cumberland House was a journey of six hundred and ninety miles. But this was only a beginning. During the winter of 1819-20 Franklin and his party made their way from Cumberland House to Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabaska, a distance, by the route traversed, of eight hundred and fifty-seven miles. From this fort the party, accompanied by Canadian voyageurs and Indian guides, made their way, in the summer of 1820, to Fort Providence, a lonely post of the North-West Company lying in latitude 62° on the northern shore of the Great Slave Lake.

These were the days of rivalry, and even open war, between the two great fur companies, the Hudson's Bay and the North-West. The Admiralty had commended Franklin's expeditions to the companies, who were to be requisitioned for the necessary supplies. But the disorders of the fur trade, and the demoralization of the Indians, owing to the free distribution of ardent spirits by the rival companies, rendered it impossible for the party to obtain adequate supplies and stores. Undeterred by difficulties, Franklin set out from Fort Providence to make his way to the Arctic seas at the mouth of the Coppermine. The expedition reached the height of land between the Great Slave Lake and the Coppermine, on the borders of the country which had been the scene of Hearne's exploits. The northern forest is here reduced to a thin growth of stunted pine and willow. It was now the end of August. The brief northern summer was drawing to its close. It was impossible to undertake the navigation of the Arctic coast till the ensuing summer. Franklin and his party built some rude log shanties which they called Fort Enterprise. Here, after having traversed over two thousand miles in all from York Factory, they spent their second winter in the

north. It was a season of great hardship. With the poor materials at their hand it was impossible to make their huts weatherproof. The wind whistled through the ill-plastered seams of the logs. So intense was the winter cold that the trees about the fort froze hard to their centres. In cutting firewood the axes splintered as against stone. In the officers' room the thermometer, sixteen feet from the log fire, marked as low as fifteen degrees below zero in the day and forty below at night. For food the party lived on deer's meat with a little fish, tea twice a day (without sugar), and on Sunday a cup of chocolate as the luxury of the week to every man. But, undismayed by cold and hardship, they kept stoutly at their work. Richardson investigated the mosses and lichens beneath the snow and acquainted himself with the mineralogy of the neighbourhood. Franklin and the two lieutenants carried out observations, their fingers freezing with the cold of forty-six below zero at noon of the brief three-hour day in the heart of winter. Sunday was a day of rest. The officers dressed in their best attire. Franklin read the service of the Church of England to his assembled company. For the French-Canadian Roman Catholics, Franklin did the best he

could; he read to them the creed of the Church of England in French. In the leisure part of the day a bundle of London newspapers was perused again and again.

The winter passed safely; the party now entered upon the most arduous part of their undertaking. Canoes were built and dragged on improvised sledges to the Coppermine. Franklin descended the river, surveying its course as he went. He passed by the scene of the massacre witnessed by Hearne, and found himself, late in July of 1821, on the shores of the Arctic. The distance from Fort Enterprise was three hundred and thirty-four miles, for one hundred and seventeen of which the canoes and baggage had been hauled over snow and ice.

Franklin and his followers, in two canoes, embarked on the polar sea and traced the course of the coast eastward for five hundred and fifty miles. The sailors were as men restored to their own element. But the Canadian voyageurs were filled with dread at the great waves of the open ocean. All that Franklin saw of the Arctic coast encouraged his belief that the American continent is separated by stretches of sea from the great masses of land that had been already discovered in the Arctic.

The North-West Passage, ice-blocked and useless, was still a geographical fact. Eager in the pursuit of his investigations he went on eastward as long as he dared—too long in fact. Food was running low. His voyageurs had lost heart, appalled at the immense spaces of ice and sea through which their frail canoes went onward into the unknown. Reluctantly, Franklin decided to turn back. But it was too late to return by water. The northern gales drove the ice in against the coast. Franklin and his men, dragging and carrying one of the canoes, took to the land, in order to make their way across the barren grounds. By this means they hoped to reach the upper waters of the Coppermine and thence Fort Enterprise, where supplies were to have been placed for them during the summer. Their journey was disastrous. Bitter cold set in as they marched. Food failed them. Day after day they tramped on, often with blinding snow in their faces, with no other sustenance than the bitter weed called *tripe de roche* that can here and there be scraped from the rocks beneath the snow. At times they found frozen remnants of deer that had been killed by wolves, a few bones with putrid meat adhering to them. These they eagerly devoured. But

often day after day passed without even this miserable sustenance. At night they lay down beside a clump of willows, trying, often in vain, to make a fire of the green twigs dragged from under the snow. So great was their famine, Franklin says, that the very sensation of hunger passed away, leaving only an exhaustion too great for words. Lieutenant Back, gaunt and emaciated, staggered forward leaning on a stick, refusing to give in. Richardson could hardly walk, while Lieutenant Hood, emaciated to the last degree, was helped on by his comrades as best they could. The Canadians and Indians suffered less in body, but, lacking the stern purpose of the officers, they were distraught with the horror of the death that seemed to await them. In their fear they had refused to carry the canoe, and had smashed it and thrown it aside. In this miserable condition the party reached, on September 26, the Coppermine river, to find it flowing still unfrozen in an angry flood which they could not cross. In vain they ranged the banks above and below. Below them was a great lake; beside and above them a swift, deep current broken by rapids. There was no crossing. They tried to gather willow faggots, and bind them into a raft. But the green wood sank so

easily that only one man could get upon the raft: to paddle or pole it in the running water was impossible. A line was made of strips of skin, and Richardson volunteered to swim the river so as to haul the raft across with the line. The bitter cold of the water paralysed his limbs. He was seen to sink beneath the leaping waters. His companions dragged him back to the bank, where for hours he lay as if lifeless beside the fire of willow branches, so emaciated that he seemed a mere skeleton when they took off his wet clothing. His comrades gazed at him with a sort of horror. Thus for days they waited. At last, with infinite patience, one of the Canadians made a sort of canoe with willow sticks and canvas. In this, with a line attached, they crossed the river one by one.

They were now only forty miles from Fort Enterprise. But their strength was failing. Hood could not go on. The party divided. Franklin and Back went forward with most of the men, while Richardson and sailor Hepburn volunteered to stay with Hood till help could be sent. The others left them in a little tent, with some rounds of ammunition and willow branches gathered for the fire. A little further on the march, three of Franklin's followers,

too exhausted to go on, dropped out, proposing to make their way back to Richardson and Hood.

The little party at the tent in the snow waited in vain. Days passed, and no help came. One of the three men who had left Franklin, an Indian called Michel, joined them, saying that the others had gone astray in the snow. But he was strange and sullen, sleeping apart and wandering off by himself to hunt. Presently, from the man's strange talk and from some meat which he brought back from his hunting and declared to be part of a wolf, Richardson realized the awful truth that Michel had killed his companions and was feeding on their bodies. A worse thing followed. Richardson and Hepburn, gathering wood a few days later, heard the report of a gun from beside the fire where they had left Lieutenant Hood, who was now in the last stage of exhaustion. They returned to find Michel beside the dead body of their comrade. He had been shot through the back of the head. Michel swore that Hood had killed himself. Richardson knew the truth, but both he and Hepburn were too enfeebled by privation to offer fight to the armed and powerful madman. The three set out for Fort Enterprise, Michel carrying a loaded gun, two

pistols and a bayonet, muttering to himself and evidently meditating a new crime. Richardson, a man of iron nerve, forestalled him. Watching his opportunity, he put a pistol to the Indian's head and blew his brains out.

Richardson and Hepburn dragged themselves forward mile by mile, encouraged by the thought of the blazing fires and the abundant food that they expected to find at Fort Enterprise. They reached the fort just in the dusk of an October evening. All about it was silence. There were no tracks in the newly fallen snow. Only a thin thread of smoke from the chimney gave a sign of life. Hurriedly they made their way in. To their horror and dismay they found Franklin and three companions, two Canadians and an Indian, stretched out in the last stages of famine. 'No words can convey an idea,' wrote Dr Richardson later on, 'of the filth and wretchedness that met our eyes on looking around. Our own misery had stolen upon us by degrees and we were accustomed to the contemplation of each other's emaciated figures, but the ghastly countenances, dilated eye-balls, and sepulchral voices of Captain Franklin and those with him were more than we could bear.' Franklin, on his part, was equally dismayed at the appearance of Richardson and Hepburn.

'We were all shocked,' he says in his journal, 'at beholding the emaciated countenances of the doctor and Hepburn, as they strongly evidenced their extremely debilitated state. The alteration in our appearance was equally distressing to them, for since the swellings had subsided we were little more than skin and bone. The doctor particularly remarked the sepulchral tone of our voices, which he requested us to make more cheerful if possible, unconscious that his own partook of the same key.'

Franklin related to the new-comers how he and his followers had reached Fort Enterprise, and to their infinite disappointment and grief had found it perfectly desolate. There was no depôt of provisions, as had been arranged, nor any trace of a letter or other message from the traders at Fort Providence or from the Indians. Lieutenant Back, who had reached the fort a little in advance of Franklin, had gone on in the hope of finding Indian hunters, or perhaps of reaching Fort Providence and sending relief. They had no food except a little *tripe de roche*, and Franklin had thus found himself, as he explained to Richardson, in the deserted fort with five companions, in a state of utter destitution. Food there was none.

From the refuse heaps of the winter before, now buried under the snow, they dug out pieces of bone and a few deer-skins; on this, with a little *tripe de roche*, they endeavoured to subsist. The log house was falling into decay. The seams gaped and the piercing air entered on every side with the thermometer twenty below zero. Franklin and his companions had tried in vain to stop the chinks and to make a fire by tearing up the rough boards of the floor. But their strength was insufficient. Already for two weeks before their arrival at Fort Enterprise they had had no meat. It was impossible that they could have existed long in the miserable shelter of the deserted fort. Franklin had endeavoured to go on. Leaving three of his companions, now too exhausted to walk far, he and the other two, a Canadian and an Eskimo, set out to try to reach help in the direction of Fort Providence. The snow was deep, and their strength was so far gone that in six hours they only struggled four miles on their way. At night they lay down beside one another in the snow, huddled together for warmth, with a bitter wind blowing over their emaciated bodies. The next morning, in recommencing their march, Franklin stumbled and fell, breaking his snow-shoe in the

fall. Realizing that he could never hope to traverse the one hundred and eighty-six miles to Fort Providence, he directed his companions to go on, and he himself made his way back to Fort Enterprise. There he had remained for a fortnight until found by Richardson and Hepburn. So weak had Franklin and his three companions become that they could not find the strength to go on cutting down the log buildings of the fort to make a fire. Adam, the Indian, lay prostrate in his bunk, his body covered with hideous swellings. The two Canadians, Peltier and Samandré, suffered such pain in their joints that they could scarcely move a step. A herd of deer had appeared on the ice of the river near by, but none of the men had strength to pursue them, nor could any one of them, said Franklin, have found the strength to raise a gun and fire it.

Such had been the position of things when Richardson and Hepburn, themselves almost in the last stage of exhaustion, found their unhappy comrades. Richardson was a man of striking energy, of the kind that knows no surrender. He set himself to gather wood, built up a blazing fire, dressed as well as he could the swollen body of the Indian, and tried to bring some order into the filth and squalor

of the hut. Hepburn meantime had killed a partridge, which the doctor then divided among them in six parts, the first fresh meat that Franklin and those with him had tasted for thirty-one days. This done, 'the doctor,' so runs Franklin's story, 'brought out his prayer book and testament, and some prayers and psalms and portions of scripture appropriate to the situation were read.'

But beyond the consolation of manifesting a brave and devout spirit, there was little that Richardson could do for his companions. The second night after his arrival Peltier died. There was no strength left in the party to lift his body out into the snow. It lay beside them in the hut, and before another day passed Samandré, the other Canadian, lay dead beside it. For a week the survivors remained in the hut, waiting for death. Then at last, and just in time, help reached them.

On November 7, nearly a month after Franklin's first arrival at the fort, they heard the sound of a musket and the shouting of men outside. Three Indians stood before the door. The valiant Lieutenant Back, after sufferings almost as great as their own, had reached a band of Indian hunters and had sent three men travelling at top speed with enough food to

keep the party alive till further succour could be brought. Franklin and his friends were saved by one of the narrowest escapes recorded in the history of northern adventure. Another week passed before the relief party of the Indians reached them, and even then Franklin and his companions were so enfeebled by privation that they could only travel with difficulty, and a month passed before they found themselves safe and sound within the shelter of Fort Providence on the Great Slave Lake. There they remained till the winter passed. A seven weeks' journey took them to York Factory on Hudson Bay, whence they sailed to England. Franklin's journey overland and on the waters of the polar sea had covered in all five thousand five hundred and fifty miles and had occupied nearly three years.

On his return to England Franklin found himself at once the object of a wide public interest. Already during his absence he had been made a commander, and the Admiralty now promoted him to the rank of captain, while the national recognition of his services was shortly afterwards confirmed by the honour of knighthood. One might think that after the perils which he had braved and the horrors which he had experienced, Sir John would have

been content to retire upon his laurels. But it was not so. There is something in the snow-covered land of the Arctic, its isolation from the world and the long silence of its winter darkness, that exercises a strange fascination upon those who have the hardihood to brave its perils. It was a moment too when interest in Arctic discovery and the advancement thereby of scientific knowledge had reached the highest point yet known. During Franklin's absence Captain Ross and Lieutenant Parry had been sent by sea into the Arctic waters. Parry had met with wonderful success, striking from Baffin Bay through the northern archipelago and reaching half-way to Bering Strait.

Franklin was eager to be off again. The year 1825 saw him start once more to resume the survey of the polar coast of America. The plan now was to learn something of the western half of the North American coast, so as to connect the discoveries of Sir Alexander Mackenzie with those made by Cook and others through Bering Strait. Franklin was again accompanied by his gallant friend, Dr Richardson. They passed again overland through the fur country, where the recent union of the rival companies had brought about a new era. They descended the Mackenzie river,

wintered on Great Bear Lake, and descended thence to the sea. Franklin struck out westward, his party surveying the coast in open boats. Their journey from their winter quarters to the sea and along the coast covered a thousand miles, and extended to within one hundred and sixty miles of the point that had then been reached by explorers from Bering Strait. At the same time Richardson, going eastward from the Mackenzie, surveyed the coast as far as the Coppermine river. Their discoveries thus connected the Pacific waters with the Atlantic, with the exception of one hundred and sixty miles on the north-west, where water was known to exist and only ice blocked the way, and of a line north and south which should bring the discoveries of Parry into connection with those of Franklin. These two were the missing links now needed in the chain of the North-West Passage.

But more than twenty years were to elapse before the discoveries thus made were carried to their completion. Franklin himself, claimed by other duties, was unable to continue his work in the Arctic, and his appointment to the governorship of Tasmania called him for a time to another sphere. Yet, little by little, the exploration of the Arctic regions was carried

on, each explorer adding something to what was already known, and each hoping that the honour of the discovery of the great passage would fall to his lot. Franklin's comrade Back, now a captain and presently to be admiral, made his way in 1834 from Canada to the polar sea down the river that bears his name. Three years later Simpson, in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, succeeded in traversing the coast from the Mackenzie to Point Barrow, completing the missing link in the western end of the chain. John and James Ross brought the exploration of the northern archipelago to a point that made it certain that somewhere or other a way through must exist to connect Baffin Bay with the coastal waters. At last the time came, in 1844, when the British Admiralty determined to make a supreme effort to unite the explorations of twenty-five years by a final act of discovery. The result was the last expedition of Sir John Franklin, glorious in its disaster, and leaving behind it a tale that will never be forgotten while the annals of the British nation remain.

CHAPTER V

THE TRAGEDY OF FRANKLIN'S FATE

THE month of May 1845 found two stout ships, the *Erebus* and the *Terror*, riding at anchor in the Thames. Both ships were already well known to the British public. They had but recently returned from the Antarctic seas, where Captain Sir James Ross, in a voyage towards the South Pole, had attained the highest southern latitude yet reached. Both were fine square-rigged ships, strengthened in every way that the shipwrights of the time could devise. Between their decks a warming and ventilating apparatus of the newest kind had been installed, and, as a greater novelty still, the attempt was now made for the first time in history to call in the power of steam for the fight against the Arctic frost. Each vessel carried an auxiliary screw and an engine of twenty horse-power. When we remember that a modern steam vessel with a horse-power of many thousands is still power-

less against the northern ice, the *Erebus* and the *Terror* arouse in us a forlorn pathos. But in the springtime of 1845 as they lay in the Thames, an object of eager interest to the flocks of sightseers in the neighbourhood, they seemed like very leviathans of the deep. Vast quantities of stores were being loaded into the ships, enough, it was said, for the subsistence of the one hundred and thirty-four members of the expedition for three years. For it was now known that Arctic explorers must be prepared to face the winter, icebound in their ships through the long polar night. That the winter could be faced with success had been shown by the experience of Sir William Parry, whose ships, the *Fury* and the *Hecla*, had been icebound for two winters (1821-23), and still more by that of Captain John Ross, who brought home the crew of the *Victory* safe and sound in 1833, after four winters in the ice.

All England was eager with expectancy over the new expedition. It was to be commanded by Sir John Franklin, the greatest sailor of the day, who had just returned from his five years in Van Diemen's Land and carried his fifty-nine winters as jauntily as a midshipman. The era was auspicious. A new reign under a

queen already beloved had just opened. There was every hope of a long, some people said a perpetual, peace: it seemed fitting that the new triumphs of commerce and science, of steam and the magnetic telegraph, should replace the older and cruder glories of war.

The expedition was well equipped for scientific research, but its main object was the discovery of the North-West Passage. We have already seen what this phrase had come to mean. It had now no reference to the uses of commerce. The question was purely one of geography. The ocean lying north of America was known to be largely occupied by a vast archipelago, between which were open sounds and seas, filled for the greater part of the year with huge packs of ice. In the Arctic winter all was frozen into an unending plain of snow, broken by distorted hummocks of ice, and here and there showing the frowning rocks of a mountainous country swept clean by the Arctic blast. In the winter deep night and intense cold settled on the scene. But in the short Arctic summer the ice-pack moved away from the shores. Lanes of water extended here and there, and sometimes, by the good fortune of a gale, a great sheet of open sea with blue tossing waves gladdened the heart of the

sailor. Through this region somewhere a water-way must exist from east to west. The currents of the sea and the drift-wood that they carried proved it beyond a doubt. Exploration had almost proved it also. Ships and boats had made their way from Bering Strait to the Coppermine. North of this they had gone from Baffin Bay through Lancaster Sound and on westward to a great sea called Melville Sound, a body of water larger than the Irish Sea. The two lines east and west overlapped widely. All that was needed now was to find a channel north and south to connect the two. This done, the North-West Passage, the will-o'-the-wisp of three hundred and fifty years, had been found.

A glance at the map will make clear the instructions given to Sir John Franklin. He was to go into the Arctic by way of Baffin Bay, and to proceed westward along the parallel of 74° 15′ north latitude, which would take him through the already familiar waters of Lancaster Sound and Barrow Strait, leading into Melville Sound. This line he was to follow as far as Cape Walker in longitude 98°, from which point it was known that waters were to be found leading southward. Beyond this position Franklin was left to his own

discretion, his instructions being merely to penetrate to the southward and westward in a course as direct to Bering Strait as the position of the land and the condition of the ice should allow.

The *Erebus* and the *Terror* sailed from England on June 19, 1845. The officers and sailors who manned their decks were the very pick of the Royal Navy and the merchant service, men inured to the perils of the northern ocean, and trained in the fine discipline of the service. Captain Crozier of the *Terror* was second in command. He had been with Ross in the Antarctic. Commander Fitzjames, Lieutenants Fairholme, Gore and others were tried and trained men. The ships were so heavily laden with coal and supplies that they lay deep in the water. Every inch of stowage had been used, and even the decks were filled up with casks. A transport sailed with them across the Atlantic carrying further supplies. Thus laden they made their way to the Whale Fish Islands, near Disco, on the west coast of Greenland. Here the transport unloaded its stores and set sail for England. It carried with it five men of Franklin's company, leaving one hundred and twenty-nine in the ill-fated expedition.

The ships put out from the coast of Greenland on, or about, July 12, 1845, to make their way across Baffin Bay to Lancaster Sound, a distance of two hundred and twenty miles. In these waters are found the great floes of ice which Davis had first seen, called by Arctic explorers the 'middle ice.' The *Erebus* and the *Terror* spent a fortnight in attempting to make the passage across, and here they were seen for the last time at sea. A whaling ship, the *Prince of Wales*, sighted the two vessels on July 26. A party of Franklin's officers rowed over to the ship and carried an invitation to the master to dine with Sir John on the next day. But the boat had hardly returned when a fine breeze sprang up, and with a clear sea ahead the *Erebus* and the *Terror* were put on their course to the west without even taking time to forward letters to England.

Thus the two ships vanished into the Arctic ice, never to be seen of Englishmen again. The summer of 1845 passed; no news came: the winter came and passed away; the spring and summer of 1846, and still no message. England, absorbed in political struggles at home—the Corn Law Repeal and the vexed question of Ireland—had still no anxiety over Franklin. No message could have come except

by the chance of a whaling ship or in some roundabout way through the territories of the Hudson's Bay Company, after all but a slender chance. The summer of 1846 came and went and then another winter, and now with the opening of the new year, 1847, the first expression of apprehension began to be heard. It was remembered how deeply laden the ships had been. The fear arose that perhaps they had foundered with all hands in the open waters of Baffin Bay, leaving no trace behind. Even the naval men began to shake their heads. Captain Sir John Ross wrote to the Admiralty to express his fear that Franklin's ships had been frozen in in such a way that their return was impossible. The Admiralty took advice. The question was gravely discussed with the leading Arctic seamen of the day. It was decided that until two years had elapsed from the time of departure (May 1845 to May 1847) no measures need be taken for the relief of the *Erebus* and the *Terror*. The date came and passed. Anxiety was deepening. The Admiralty decided to act. Great stores of pemmican, some eight tons, together with suitable boats and experienced crews, were sent in June 1847 to Hudson Bay, ready for an expedition along the northern coast. A ship

was sent with supplies to meet Franklin in Bering Strait, and two more vessels were strengthened and equipped to be ready to follow on the track of the *Erebus* and the *Terror* in 1848. As this last year advanced and winter passed into summer, a shudder of apprehension was felt throughout the nation. It was felt now that some great disaster had happened, or even now was happening. It was known that Franklin's expedition had carried food for at best three years: the three years had come and gone. Franklin's men, if anywhere alive, must be suffering all the horrors of starvation in the frozen fastness of the Arctic.

We may imagine the awful pictures that rose up before the imagination of the friends and relatives, the wives and children, of the one hundred and twenty-nine gallant men who had vanished in the *Erebus* and the *Terror*—visions of ships torn and riven by the heaving ice, of men foodless and shelterless in the driving snow, looking out vainly from the bleak shores of some rocky coast for the help that never came—awful pictures indeed, yet none more awful than the grim reality.

A generous frenzy seized upon the nation. The cry went up from the heart of the people that Franklin must be found; he and his men

must be rescued—they would not speak of them as dead. Ships must be sent out with all the equipment that science could devise and the wealth of a generous nation could supply. Ships *were* sent out. Year after year ships fought their way from Baffin Bay to the islands of the north. Ships sailed round the distant Horn and through the Pacific to Bering Strait. Down the Mackenzie and the great rivers of the north, the canoes of the voyageurs danced in the rapids and were paddled swiftly over the wider stretches of moving water. Over the frozen snow the sledges toiled against the storm. And still no word of Franklin, till all the weary outline of the frozen coast was traced in their wanderings: till twenty-one thousand miles of Arctic sea and shore had been tracked out. Thus the great epic of the search for Franklin ran slowly to its close. With each year the hope that was ever deferred made the heart sick. Anxiety deepened into dread, and even dread gave way to the cruel certainty of despair. Not till twelve years had passed was the search laid aside: not until, little by little, the evidence was found that told all that we know of the fate of the *Erebus* and the *Terror*.

First in the field was Richardson, the gallant

friend and comrade of Franklin's former journeys. He would not believe that Franklin had failed. He knew too well the temper of the man. Franklin had been instructed to strike southward from the Arctic seas to the American coast. On that coast he would be found. Thither went Sir John Richardson, taking with him a man of like metal to himself, one John Rae, a Hudson's Bay man, fashioned in the north. Down the Mackenzie they went and then eastward along the coast searching for traces of the *Erebus* and the *Terror*. For two years they searched, tracing their way from the Mackenzie to the Coppermine. But no vestige of Franklin did they find. The queen's ships were searching too. Sir James Ross, with the *Enterprise* and the *Investigator*, went into Lancaster Sound. The *Plover* and the *Herald* went to Bering Strait. The *North Star* went in at Wolstenholme Sound. The *Resolute*, the *Assistance*, the *Sophia*—a very flock of admiralty ships—spread their white wings for the Arctic seas. The Hudson's Bay Company sent Sir John Ross, a tried explorer, in the yacht *Felix*. Lady Franklin, the sorrow-stricken wife of the lost commander, sent out Captain Forsyth in the *Prince Albert*. One Robert Spedden sailed his private yacht, the

Nancy Dawson, in through Bering Strait; and Henry Grinnell of New York (be his name honoured), sent out two expeditions at his own charge. By water and overland there went out, between 1847 and 1851, no less than twenty-one expeditions searching for the *Erebus* and the *Terror*.

Thus passed six years from the time when Franklin sailed out of the Thames, and still no trace, no vestige had been found to tell the story of his fate. Then at last news came, the first news of the *Erebus* and the *Terror* since they were sighted by the whaling ship in 1845. The news in a way was neither good nor bad. But it showed that at least the melancholy forebodings of those who said that the heavily laden ships must have foundered before they reached the Arctic were entirely mistaken. Captain Penny, master of the *Lady Franklin*, had sailed under Admiralty orders in 1850, and had followed on the course laid down in Franklin's instructions. He returned in 1851, bringing news that on Beechey Island, a little island lying on the north side of Barrow Strait, he had found the winter quarters that must have been occupied by the expedition in 1845-46, the first winter after its departure. There were the remains of a large storehouse,

a workshop and an observatory; a blacksmith's forge was found, with many coal bags and cinders lying about, and odds and ends of all sorts, easily identified as coming from the lost ships. Most ominous of all was the discovery of over six hundred empty cans that had held preserved meat, the main reliance of the expedition. These were found regularly piled in little mounds. The number of them was far greater than Franklin's men would have consumed during the first winter, and, to make the conclusion still clearer, the preparation was of a brand of which the Admiralty since 1845 had been compelled to destroy great quantities, owing to its having turned putrid in the tins. It was plain that the food supply of the *Erebus* and the *Terror* must have been seriously depleted, and the dangers of starvation have set in long before three years were completed.

Three graves were found on Beechey Island with head-boards marking the names and ages of three men of the crew who had died in the winter. Near a cape of the island was a cairn built of stone. It was evidently intended to hold the records of the expedition. Yet, strange to say, neither in the cairn nor anywhere about it was a single document to be found.

The greatest excitement now prevailed. Hope ran high that at least some survivors of the men of the *Erebus* and the *Terror* might be found, even if the ships themselves had been lost. The Admiralty redoubled its efforts. Already Captains Collinson and M'Clure had been sent out (in 1850) to sail round the Horn, and were on their way into the Arctic region via Bering Strait. To these were now added a squadron under Captain Sir Edward Belcher consisting of the *Assistance* with a steam tender named the *Pioneer*, the *Resolute* with its tender the *Intrepid*, and the *North Star*. Stations were to be made at Beechey Island and at two other points in the region now indicated as the scene of Sir John Franklin's operations. From these sledge and boat parties were to be sent out in all directions. At the same time Lady Franklin dispatched the *Albert* under Captain Kennedy and Lieutenant Bellot, an officer of the French navy who had given his services to the cause.

Once again hope was doomed to disappointment. The story of the expeditions was an almost unbroken record of disaster. Captain M'Clure, in the *Investigator*, separated from his consort, and vanished into the northern ice; for three years nothing was heard of his vessel.

The gallant Bellot, attempting to carry dispatches over the ice, sealed his devotion with his life. Belcher's ships the *Assistance* and the *Resolute*, with their two tenders, froze fast in the ice. Despite the earnest protests of some of his officers, Belcher abandoned them, and, in the end, was able to return home. The Admiralty had to face the loss of four good ships with large quantities of stores. It had been better perhaps had they remained lost. One of the abandoned ships, the *Resolute*, its hatches battened down, floated out of the ice, and was found by an American whaler, masterless, tossing in the open waters of Baffin Bay. Belcher may have been right in abandoning his ships to save the crews, but his judgment and even his courage were severely questioned, and unhappy bitterness was introduced where hitherto there had been nothing but the record of splendid endeavour and mutual help. The only bright spot was seen in the achievement of Captain, afterwards Sir Robert, M'Clure, who reappeared with his crew safe and sound after four winters in the Arctic. He had made his way in the *Investigator* (1850 to 1853) from Bering Strait to within sight of Melville Sound. He had spent three winters in the ice, the last two years in one and the same spot,

fast frozen, to all appearances, for ever. With supplies dangerously low and his crew weakened by exposure and privation, M'Clure reluctantly left his ship. He and his men fortunately reached the ships of Sir Edward Belcher, having thus actually made the North-West Passage.

The disasters of 1853-54 cast a deeper gloom than ever over the search for Franklin. Moreover, the rising clouds in the East and presently the outbreak of the Crimean War prevented further efforts. Ships and men were needed elsewhere than in the northern seas. It began to look as if failure was now final, and that nothing more could be done. Following naval precedent, a court-martial had been held to investigate the action of Captain Sir Edward Belcher. 'The solemn silence,' wrote Captain M'Clure afterwards, 'with which the venerable president of the court returned Captain Belcher his sword, with a bare acquittal, best conveyed the painful feelings which wrung the hearts of all professional men upon that occasion; and all felt that there was no hope of the mystery of Franklin's fate being cleared up in our time except by some unexpected miracle.'

The unexpected happened. Strangely enough,

it was just at this juncture that a letter sent by Dr John Rae from the Hudson Bay country brought to England the first authentic news of the fate of Franklin's men. Rae had been sent overland from the north-west shores of Hudson Bay to the coast of the Arctic at the point where the Back or Great Fish river runs in a wide estuary to the sea. He had wintered on the isthmus (now called after him) which separates Regent's Inlet from Repulse Bay, and in the spring of 1854 had gone westward with sledges towards the mouth of the Back. On his way he fell in with Eskimos, who told him that several years before a party of about forty white men had been seen hauling a boat and sledges over the ice. This was on the west side of the island called King William's Land. None of the men, so the savages said, could speak to them in their own language; but they made signs to show that they had lost their ships, and that they were trying to make their way to where deer could be found. All the men looked thin, and the Eskimos thought they had very little food. They had bought some seal's flesh from the savages. They hauled their sledges and the boat along with drag-ropes, at which all were tugging except one very tall big man, who seemed to be a chief and

walked by himself. Later on in the same season, so the Eskimos said, they had found the bodies of a lot of men lying on the ice, and had seen some graves and five dead bodies on an island at the mouth of a river. Some of the bodies were lying in tents. The big boat had been turned over as if to make a shelter, and under it were dead men. One that lay on the island was the body of the chief; he had a telescope strapped over his shoulders, and his gun lay underneath him. The savages told Dr Rae that they thought that the last survivors of the white men must have been feeding on the dead bodies, as some of these were hacked and mutilated and there was flesh in the kettles. There were signs that some of the party might have escaped; for on the ground there were fresh bones and feathers of geese, showing that the men were still alive when the wild fowl came north, which would be about the end of May. There was a quantity of gunpowder and ammunition lying around, and the Eskimos thought that they had heard shots in the neighbourhood, though they had seen no living men, but only the corpses on the ice. A great number of relics—telescopes, guns, compasses, spoons, forks, and so on—were gathered by the natives, and of these Dr Rae

forwarded a large quantity to England. They left no doubt as to the identity of the unfortunate victims. There was a small silver plate engraved 'Sir John Franklin, K.C.B.', and a spoon with a crest and the initials F. R. M. C. (those of Captain Crozier), and a great number of articles easily recognized as coming from the *Erebus* and the *Terror*.

One may well imagine the intense interest which Dr Rae's discoveries aroused in England. Rae had been unable, it is true, to make his way to the actual scene of the disaster as described by the Eskimos, but it was now felt that at last certain tidings had been received of the death of Franklin and his men. Dr Rae and his party received the ten thousand pounds which the government had offered to whosoever should bring correct news of the fate of the expedition.

In all except a few hearts hope was now abandoned. It was felt that all were dead. Anxious though the government was to obtain further details of the tragedy, it was not thought proper at such a national crisis as the Crimean War to dispatch more ships to the Arctic. Something, however, was done. A chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, named Anderson, was sent overland in 1855 to explore

the mouth of the Back river. He found in and around Montreal Island, at the mouth of the river, numerous relics of the disaster. A large quantity of chips and shavings seemed to indicate the place where the savages had broken up the boat. But no documents or papers were found nor any bodies of the dead. Anderson had no interpreter, and could only communicate by signs with the savages whom he found alone on the island. But he gathered from them that the white men had all died for want of food.

For two years nothing more was done. Then, as the war cloud passed away, the unsolved mystery began again to demand solution. Some faint hope too struggled to life. It was argued that perhaps some of the white men were still alive. The imagination conjured up a ghastly picture of a few survivors, still alive when, with the coming of the wild fowl, life and warmth returned. With what horror must they have turned their backs upon the hideous scene of their sufferings, leaving the dead as they lay, and preferring to leave unwritten the chronicle of an experience too awful to relate. There, penned in between the barren grounds and the sea, they might have somehow continued to live: there they might still be found.

It was through the personal efforts of Lady Franklin, who devoted thereto the last remnant of her fortune, that the final expedition was sent out in 1857. The yacht *Fox* was commanded by Captain M'Clintock. He had already spent many years in the Arctic. Touched by the poignant grief of Lady Franklin, he gave his service gratuitously in a last effort to trace the fate of the missing men. Other officers gave their services and even money to the search. The little *Fox* sailed in 1857, to search the waters between Beechey Island and the mouth of the Back. When she returned to England two years later she brought back with her the first, and the last, direct information ever received from the *Erebus* and the *Terror*. In a cairn on the west coast of King William's Island was found a document placed there from Franklin's ships. It was dated May 28, 1847 (two years after the ships left England). It read: 'H. M. Ships *Erebus* and *Terror* wintered in the ice lat. 70° 5′ N. long., 98° 23′ west, having wintered in 1845-46 at Beechey Island after having ascended Wellington Channel to Lat. 77° and returned by the west side of Cornwallis Island. Sir John Franklin commanding the expedition. All well.'

This showed that Franklin had, as already gathered, explored the channels west and north from Lancaster Sound, and finding no way through had wintered on Beechey Island (1845-46). Striking south from there his ships had been caught in the open ice-pack, where they had passed their second winter. At the time of writing, Franklin must have been looking eagerly forward to their coming liberation and the prosecution of their discoveries towards the American coast.

But the document did not end there. It had evidently been placed in the cairn in May of 1847; a year later the cairn had been reopened and to the document a note had been appended, written in fine writing round the edge of the original. The torn edge of the paper leaves part of the date missing. It runs '. . . 848. H.M. Ships *Erebus* and *Terror* were deserted on the 22 of April, 5 leagues NNW. of this . . . been beset since 12th Sept. 1846. The officers and crews consisting of 105 souls under the command . . . tain F. R. M. Crozier landed here in Lat. 69° 37′ 42″ Long. 98° 41′.'

No words could convey better than these simple lines the full horror of the disaster: two winters frozen in the ice-pack till the

lack of food and the imminence of starvation compelled the officers and men to leave the ships long before the summer season and try to make their way over ice and snow to the south! And Franklin? The other edge of the paper contained in the same writing a note that ran: 'Sir John Franklin died on the 11th June 1847 and the total loss by death to the expedition has been to date 9 officers and 14 men. F. R. M. Crozier, Captain and Senior Officer. James Fitzjames, Captain H.M.S. *Erebus*.' At one corner of the paper are the final words that, taken along with the stories of the Eskimos, explained the last chapter of the tragedy—'and start to-morrow 26th for Back's Fish River.'

M'Clintock did all that could be done. He and his party traced out the coast on both sides of King William's Island, and, having reached the mouth of the Back river, he traced the course of Crozier and his perishing companions step by step backwards over the scene of the disaster. The Eskimos whom he met told him of the freezing in of the two great ships: how the white men had abandoned them and walked over the ice: how one ship had been crushed in the ice a few months later and had gone down: and how the other ship

had lain a wreck for years and years beside the coast of King William's Island. One aged woman who had visited the scene told M'Clintock's party that there had been on the wrecked ship the dead body of a tall man with long teeth and large bones.

The searchers themselves found more direct testimony still. A few miles south of Cape Herschel lay the skeleton of one of Franklin's men, outstretched on the ground, just as he had fallen on the fatal march, the head pointing towards the Back river. At another point there was found a boat with two corpses in it, the one lying in the stern carefully covered as if by the act of his surviving comrade, the other lying in the bow, two loaded muskets standing upright beside the body. A great number of relics that marked the path of Crozier's men were found along the shore of King William's Island. In one place a plundered cairn was discovered. But, strangely enough, no document or writing to tell anything of the fate of the survivors after they started on their last march. That all perished by the way there can be little doubt. But it is altogether probable that before the final catastrophe overtook them they had endeavoured to place somewhere a record of their achievements and their suffer-

ings. Such a record may still lie buried among the stones of the desolate region where they died, and it may well be that some day the chance discovery of an explorer will bring it to light. But it can tell us little more than we already know by inference of the tragic but inspiring disaster that overwhelmed the men of the *Erebus* and the *Terror*.

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HOW THE HABITANT LIVED

'AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM'

FROM

THE SEIGNEURS OF OLD CANADA

BY

WILLIAM BENNETT MUNRO

BIBLIOTHÈQUE

CHAPTER V

HOW THE HABITANT LIVED

THE seigneurs of New France were not a privileged order. Between them and the habitants there was no great gulf fixed, no social impasse such as existed between the two classes in France. The seigneur often lived and worked like a habitant; his home was not a great deal better than theirs; his daily fare was much the same. The habitant, on the other hand, might himself become a seigneur by saving a little money, and this is what frequently happened. By becoming a seigneur, however, he did not change his mode of life, but continued to work as he had done before. There were some, of course, who took their social rank with great seriousness, and proved ready to pay out good money for letters-patent giving them minor titles of nobility. Thus Jacques Le Ber, a bourgeois of Montreal who made a comfortable fortune out of the fur trade, bought a seigneury and then acquired the rank

of *gentilhomme* by paying six thousand livres for it. But the possession of an empty title, acquired by purchase or through the influence of official friends at Quebec, did not make much impression on the masses of the people. The first citizens in the hearts of the community were the men of personal courage, talent, and worldly virtues.

> Sur cette terre encor sauvage
> Les vieux titres sont inconnus ;
> La noblesse est dans le courage,
> Dans les talents, dans les vertus.

Nevertheless, to be a seigneur was always an honour, for the manor-house was the recognized social centre of every neighbourhood.

The manor-house was not a mansion. Built sometimes of rough-hewn timber, but more commonly of stone, it was roomy and comfortable, although not much more pretentious than the homes of well-to-do habitants. Three or four rooms on the ground floor with a spacious attic made up the living quarters. The furniture often came from France, and its quality gave the whole interior an air of distinction. As for the habitants, their homes were also of stone or timber—long and rather narrow structures, heavily built, and low.

They were whitewashed on the outside with religious punctuality each spring. The eaves projected over the walls, and high-peaked little dormer windows thrust themselves from the roof here and there. The houses stood very near the roadway, with scarcely ever a grass plot or single shade tree before them. In midsummer the sun beat furiously upon them; in winter they stood in all their bleakness full-square to the blasts that drove across the river.

Behind the house was a storeroom built in 'lean-to' fashion, and not far away stood the barn and stable, made usually of timbers laid one upon the other with chinks securely mortared. Somewhat aloof was the root-house, half dug in the ground, banked generously with earth round about and overhead. Within convenient distance of the house, likewise, was the bake-oven, built of boulders, mortar, and earth, with the wood-pile near by. Here with roaring fires once or twice each week the family baking was done. Round the various buildings ran some sort of fence, whether of piled stones or rails, and in a corner of the enclosed plot was the habitant's garden. Viewed by the traveller who passed along the river this straggling line of whitewashed structures stood out in bold relief against the

towering background of green hills beyond. The whole colony formed one long rambling village, each habitant touching elbows with his neighbour on either side.

Within the habitant's abode there were usually not more than three regular rooms. The front door opened into a capacious living room with its great open fireplace and hearth. This served as dining-room as well. A gaily coloured woollen carpet or rug, made in the colony, usually decked the floor. There was a table and a couch; there were chairs made of pine with seats of woven underbark, all more or less comfortable. Often a huge side-board rose from the floor to the low, open-beamed ceiling. Pictures of saints adorned the walls. A spinning-wheel stood in the corner, sharing place perhaps with a musket set on the floor stock downward, but primed for ready use. Adjoining this room was the kitchen with its fireplace for cooking, its array of pots and dishes, its cupboards, shelves, and other furnishings. All of these latter the habitant and his sons made for themselves. The economic isolation of the parish made its people versatile after their own crude fashion. The habitant was a handy man, getting pretty good results from the use of rough material

and tools. Even at the present day his descendants retain much of this facility. At the opposite end of the house was a bedroom. Upstairs was the attic, so low that one could scarcely stand upright in any part of it, but running the full length and breadth of the house. Here the children, often a round dozen of them, were stowed at night. A shallow iron bowl of tallow with a wick protruding gave its dingy light. Candles were not unknown, but they were a luxury. Every one went to bed when darkness came on, for there was nothing else to do. Windows were few, and to keep out the cold they were tightly battened down. The air within must have been stifling; but, as one writer has suggested, the habitant and his family got along without fresh air in his dwelling just as his descendant of to-day manages to get along without baths.

For the most part the people of Old Canada were comfortably clothed and well fed. Warm cloth of drugget—*étoffe du pays*, as it was called—came from the hand-looms of every parish. It was all wool and stood unending wear. It was cheap, and the women of the household fashioned it into clothes. Men, women, and children alike wore it in everyday use; but on occasions of festivity they liked

to appear in their brighter plumage of garments brought from France. In the summer the children went nearly unclothed and barefooted always. A single garment without sleeves and reaching to the knees was all that covered their nakedness. In winter every one wore furs outdoors. Beaver skins were nearly as cheap as cloth, and the wife of the poorest habitant could have a winter wardrobe that it would nowadays cost a small fortune to provide. Heavy clogs made of hide—the *bottes sauvages* as they were called—or moccasins of tanned and oiled skins, impervious to the wet, were the popular footwear in winter and to some extent in summer as well. They were laced high up above the ankles, and with a liberal supply of coarse-knitted woollen socks the people managed to trudge anywhere without discomfort even in very cold weather. Plaited straw hats were made by the women for ordinary summer use, but hats of beaver, made in the fashion of the day, were always worn on dress occasions. Every man wore one to Mass each Sunday morning. In winter the knitted cap or toque was the favourite. Made in double folds of woollen yarn with all the colours of the rainbow, it could be drawn down over the ears as a pro-

tection from the cold; with its tassel swinging to and fro this toque was worn by everybody, men, women, and children alike. Attached to the coat was often a hood, known as a *capuchin*, which might be pulled over the toque as an additional head-covering on a journey through the storm. Knitted woollen gloves were also made at home, likewise mitts of sheepskin with the wool left inside. The apparel of the people was thus adapted to their environment, and besides being somewhat picturesque it was thoroughly comfortable.

The daily fare of New France was not of limitless variety, but it was nourishing and adequate. Bread made from wheat flour and cakes made from ground maize were plentiful. Meat and fish were within the reach of all. Both were cured by smoke after the Indian fashion and could be kept through the winter without difficulty. Vegetables of various kinds were grown, but peas were the great staple. Peas were to the French what maize was to the redskin. In every rural home *soupe aux pois* came daily to the table. Whole families were reared to vigorous manhood on it. Even to-day the French Canadian has not by any means lost his liking for this nourishing and palatable food. Beans, too, were a

favourite vegetable in the old days; not the tender *haricots* of the modern menu, but the *fèves* or large, tough-fibred beans that grew in Normandy and were brought by its people to the New World. There were potatoes, of course, and they were *patates*, not *pommes de terre*. Cucumbers were plentiful, indeed they were being grown by the Indians when the French first came to the St Lawrence. As they were not indigenous to that region it is for others than the student of history to explain how they first came there. Fruits there were also, such as apples, plums, cherries, and French gooseberries, but not in abundance. Few habitants had orchards, but most of them had one or two fruit-trees grown from seedlings which came from France. Wild fruits, especially raspberries, cranberries, and grapes, were to be had for the picking, and the younger members of each family gathered them all in season. Even in the humbler homes of the land there was no need for any one to go hungry. More than one visitor to the colony, indeed, was impressed by the rude comfort in which the habitants lived. 'The boors of these manours,' wrote the voluble La Hontan,[1] 'live with

[1] Louis Armand, Baron La Hontan, came to Canada in 1683, and lived for some time among the habitants of Beaupré, below

greater comfort than an infinity of the gentry in France.' And for once he was probably right.

As for drink, there were both tea and coffee to be had from the traders; but they were costly and not in very general use. Milk was cheap and plentiful. Brandy and wine came from France in shiploads, but brandy was largely used in the Indian trade, and wine appeared only on the tables of the well-to-do; the ordinary habitant could not afford it save on state occasions. Cheap beer, brewed in the colony, was within easier range of his purse. There were several breweries in the colony, although they do not appear to have been very profitable to their owners. Home-brewed ale was much in use. When duly aged it made a fine beverage, although insidious in its effects sometimes. But no guest ever came to any colonial home without a proffer of something to drink. Hospitality demanded it. The habitant, as a rule, was very fond of the flagon. Very often, as the records of the day lead us to believe, he drank not wisely but too well. Idleness had a hand in the development of this

Quebec, and afterwards in the neighbourhood of Montreal. He also journeyed in the Far West and wrote a fantastic account of his travels, of which an English edition was published in 1703.

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trait, for in the long winters the habitant had little to do but visit his neighbours.

The men of New France smoked a great deal, and the women sometimes followed their example. Children learned to smoke before they learned to read or write. Tobacco was grown in the colony, and every habitant had a patch of it in his garden; and then as now this *tabac canadien* was fierce stuff with an odour that scented the whole seigneury. The art of smoking a pipe was one of the first lessons which the Frenchman acquired from his Indian friends, and this became the national solace through the long spells of idleness. Such as it was, the tobacco of the colony was no luxury, for every one could grow enough and to spare to serve his wants. The leaves were set in the sun to cure, and were then put away till needed.

As to the methods of farming, neither the contemporary records nor the narratives of travel tell us much. But it is beyond doubt that the habitant was not a very scientific cultivator. Catalogne remarks in his valuable report that if the fields of France were cultivated like the farms of Canada three-fourths of the people would starve. Fertilization of the land was rare. All that was usually done in this

direction was to burn the stubble in the spring before the land went under the plough. Rotation of crops was practically unknown. A portion of each farm was allowed to lie fallow once in a while, but as these fallow fields were rarely ploughed and weeds might grow without restraint, the rest from cultivation was of little value. Even the cultivated fields were ploughed but once a year and rather poorly at that, for the land was ploughed in ridges and there was a good deal of waste between the furrows. When Peter Kalm, the famous Scandinavian naturalist and traveller, paid his visit to the colony in 1748 he found 'white wheat most commonly in the fields.' But oats, rye, and barley were also grown. Some of the habitants grew maize in great quantities, while nearly all raised vegetables of various sorts, chiefly cabbages, pumpkins, and coarse melons. Some gave special attention to the cultivation of flax and hemp. The meadows of the St Lawrence valley were very fertile, and far superior, in Kalm's opinion, to those of the New England colonies; they furnished fodder in abundance. Wild hay could be had for the cutting, and every habitant had his conical stack of it on the river marshes. Hence the raising of cattle and horses became an im-

portant branch of colonial husbandry. The cattle and sheep were of inferior breed, undersized, and not very well cared for. The horses were much better. The habitant had a particular fondness for horses; even the poorest tried to keep two or three. This, as Catalogne pointed out, was a gross extravagance, for there was no work for the horses to do during nearly half the year.

The implements of agriculture were as crude as the methods. Most of them were made in the colony out of inferior materials and with poor workmanship. Kalm saw no drains in any part of the colony, although, as he naïvely remarked, 'they seemed to be much needed in places.' The fields were seldom fenced, and the cattle often made their way among the growing grain. The women usually worked with the men, especially at harvest time, for extra labour was scarce. Even the wife and daughters of the seigneur might be seen in the fields during the busy season. Each habitant had a clumsy, wooden-wheeled cart or wagon for workaday use. In this he trundled his produce to town once or twice a year. For pleasure there was the calêche and the carriole. The calêche was a quaint two-wheeled vehicle with its seat set high in the air

on springs of generous girth; the carriole, a low-set sleigh on solid wooden runners, with a high back to give protection from the cold. Both are still used in various parts of Quebec to-day. The habitant made his own harness, often decorating it gaily and taking great pride in his workmanship.

The feudal folk of New France did not spend all their time or energies in toil. They had numerous holidays and times of recreation. Loyal to his Church, the habitant kept every *jour de fête* with religious precision. These days came frequently, so much so, according to Catalogne's report, that during the whole agricultural season from May to October, only ninety clear days were left for labour. On these numerous holidays were held the various festivals, religious or secular. Sunday, also, was a day of general rendezvous. Every one came to Mass, whatever the weather. After the service various announcements were made at the church door by the local *capitaine de la milice*, who represented the civil government in the parish. Then the rest of the day was given over to visiting and recreation. There was plenty of time, moreover, for hunting and fishing; and the average habitant did both to his heart's content. In the winter there

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was a great deal of visiting back and forth among neighbours, even on week-days. Dancing was a favourite diversion and card-playing also. Gambling at cards was more common among the people than suited either the priests or the civil authorities, as the records often attest. Less objectionable amusements were afforded by the *corvées récréatives* or gatherings at a habitant's home for some combination of work and play. The corn-husking corvée, for reasons which do not need elucidation, was of course the most popular of these. Of study or reading there was very little, for only a very small percentage of the people could read. Save for a few manuals of devotion there were no books in the home, and very few anywhere in the colony.

Two or three chroniclers of the day have left us pen-pictures of the French Canadians as they were before the English came. As a race, Giles Hocquart says, they were physically strong, well set-up, with plenty of stamina. They impressed La Hontan also as vigorous and untiring at anything that happened to gain their interest. They were fond of honours and sensitive to the slightest affront. This in part accounts for their tendency to litigiousness, which various intendants mentioned with

regret. The habitant went to law with his neighbour at every opportunity. His attitude toward questions of public policy was one of rare self-control; but when anything touched his own personal interests he always waxed warm immediately. Pretexts for squabbling there were in plenty. With lands unfenced and cattle wandering about, with most deeds and other legal documents loosely drawn, with too much time on their hands during the winter, it is not surprising that the people were continually falling out and rushing to the nearest royal court. The intendant Raudot suggested that this propensity should be curbed, otherwise there would soon be more lawsuits than settlers in the colony.

On the whole, however, the habitant was well behaved and gave the authorities very little trouble. To the Church of his fathers he gave ungrudging devotion, attending its services and paying its tithes with exemplary care. The Church was a great deal to the habitant; it was his school, his hospital, his newspaper, his philosopher telling of things present and things to come. From a religious point of view the whole colony was a unit. 'Thank God,' wrote one governor, 'there are no heretics here.' The Church, needing to spend

no time or thought in crushing its enemies, could give all its attention to its friends. As for offences against the laws of the land these were conspicuously few. The banks of the St Lawrence, when once the redskin danger was put out of the way, were quite safe for men to live upon. The hand of justice was swift and sure, but its intervention was not very often needed. New France was as law-abiding as New England; her people were quite as submissive to their leaders in both Church and State.

The people were fond of music, and seem to have obtained great enjoyment from their rasping, home-made violins. Every parish had its fiddler. But the popular repertoire was not very extensive. The Norman airs and folk-songs of the day were easy to learn, simple and melodious. They have remained in the hearts and on the lips of all French Canada for over two centuries. The shantyman of Three Rivers still goes off to the woods chanting the *Malbrouck s'en va-t-en guerre* which his ancestors sang in the days of Blenheim and Oudenarde. Many other traits of the race have been borne to the present time with little change. Then as now the habitant was a voluble talker, a teller of great stories about his own feats and experiences. Hocquart was impressed with

the scant popular regard for the truth in such things, and well he may have been. Even to-day this trait has not wholly disappeared.

Unlike his prototype, the censitaire of Old France, the habitant never became dispirited; even when things went wrong he retained his *bonhomie*. Taking too little thought for the morrow, he liked, as Charlevoix remarks, 'to get the fun out of his money, and scarcely anybody amused himself by hoarding it.' He was light-hearted even to frivolousness, and this gave the austere Church fathers many serious misgivings. He was courteous always, but boastful, and regarded his race as the salt of the earth. A Norman in every bone of his body, he used, as his descendants still do, quaint Norman idioms and forms of speech. He was proud of his ancestry. Stories that went back to the days when 'twenty thousand thieves landed at Hastings' were passed along from father to son, gaining in terms of prodigious valour as they went. His versatility gained him the friendship and confidence of the Indian, an advantage which his English brother to the south was rarely able to secure.

Much of the success which marked French diplomacy with the tribes was due to this versatility. Beneath an ungainly exterior the

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habitant often concealed a surprising ability in certain lines of action. He was a master of blandishment when he had an end thereby to gain. Dealings which required duplicity, provided the outcome appeared to be desirable, did not rudely shock his conscience. He had no Puritan scruples in his dealings with men of another race and religion. But in many things he had a high sense of honour, and nothing roused his ire so readily as to question it. Unstable as water, however, he did not excel in tasks that took patience. He wanted to plough one day and hunt the next, so that in the long run he rarely did anything well. This spirit of independence was very pronounced. The habitant felt himself to be a free man. This is why he spurned the name 'censitaire.' As Charlevoix puts it, 'he breathed from his birth the air of liberty,' and showed it in the way he carried his head. A singular type, when all is said, and worthy of more study than it has received.

CHAPTER VI

'AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM'

CHURCH and State had a common aim in early Canada. Both sought success, not for themselves, but for 'the greater glory of God.' From beginning to end, therefore, the Catholic Church was a staunch ally of the civil authorities in all things which made for real and permanent colonial progress. There were many occasions, of course, when these two powers came almost to blows, for each had its own interpretation of what constituted the colony's best interests. But historians have given too much prominence to these rather brief intervals of antagonism, and have thereby created a misleading impression. The civil and religious authorities of New France were not normally at variance. They clashed fiercely now and then, it is quite true; but during the far greater portion of two centuries they supported each other firmly and worked hand in hand.

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Now the root of all trouble, when these two interests came into ill-tempered controversy, was the conduct of the coureurs de bois. These roving traders taught the savages all the vices of French civilization in its most degenerate days. They debauched the Indian with brandy, swindled him out of his furs, and entered into illicit relations with the women of the tribes. They managed in general to convince the aborigines that all Frenchmen were dishonest and licentious. That the representatives of the Most Christian King should tolerate such conduct could not be regarded by the Church as anything other than plain malfeasance in office.

The Church in New France was militant, and in its vanguard of warriors was the Jesuit missionary. Members of the Society of Jesus first came to Quebec in 1625; others followed year by year and were sent off to establish their outposts of religion in the wilderness. They were men of great physical endurance and unconquerable will. The Jesuit went where no others dared to go; he often went alone, and always without armed protection.

> Behold him on his way; his breviary
> Which from his girdle hangs, his only shield.
> That well-known habit is his panoply,
> That Cross the only weapon he will wield;

By day he bears it for his staff afield,
By night it is the pillow of his bed.
No other lodging these wild woods can yield
Than Earth's hard lap, and rustling overhead
A canopy of deep and tangled boughs far spread.

It is not strange that the Jesuit father should have disliked the traders. A single visit from these rough and lawless men would undo the spiritual labour of years. How could the missionary enforce his lessons of righteousness when men of his own race so readily gave the lie to all his teachings? The missionaries accordingly complained to their superiors in poignant terms, and these in turn hurled their thunderbolts of excommunication against all who offended. But the trade was profitable, and Mammon continued, as in all ages, to retain his corps of ardent disciples. Religion and trade never became friendly in New France, nor could they ever become friendly so long as the Church stood firmly by its ancient traditions as a friend of law and order.

With agriculture, however, religion was on better terms. Men who stayed on their farms and tilled the soil might be grouped into parishes, their lands could be made to yield the tithe, their spiritual needs might readily be ministered unto. Hence it became the policy of the Church to support the civil

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authorities in getting lands cleared for settlement, in improving the methods of cultivation, and in strengthening the seigneurial system at every point. This support the hierarchy gave in various ways, by providing curés for outlying seigneuries, by helping to bring peasant farmers from France, by using its influence to promote early marriages, and above all by setting an example before the people in having progressive agriculture on Church lands.

Both directly and through its dependent organizations the Catholic Church became the largest single landholder of New France. As early as 1626 the Jesuits received their first grant of land, the concession of Notre-Dame des Anges, near Quebec; and from that date forward the order received at intervals large tracts in various parts of the colony. Before the close of French dominion in Canada it had acquired a dozen estates, comprising almost a million arpents of land. This was about one-eighth of the entire area given out in seigneuries. Its two largest seigneurial estates were Batiscan and Cap de la Magdelaine; but Notre-Dame des Anges and Sillery, though smaller in area, were from their closeness to Quebec of much greater value. The king appreciated the work of the

Jesuits in Canada, and would gladly have contributed from the royal funds to its furtherance. But as the civil projects of the colony took a great deal of money, he was constrained, for the most part, to show his appreciation of religious enterprise by grants of land. As land was plentiful his bounty was lavish—sometimes a hundred thousand arpents at a time.

Next to the Jesuits as sharers of the royal generosity came the bishop and the Quebec seminary, with a patrimony of nearly seven hundred thousand arpents, an accumulation which was largely the work of François de Laval, first bishop of Quebec and founder of the seminary. The Sulpicians had, at the time the colony passed into English hands, an estate of about a quarter of a million arpents, including the most valuable seigneury of New France, on the island of Montreal. The Ursulines of Quebec and of Three Rivers possessed about seventy-five thousand arpents, while other orders and institutions, a half-dozen in all, had estates of varying acreage. Directly under its control the Church had thus acquired in mortmain over two million arpents, while the lay landowners of the colony had secured only about three times as much. It held about one-quarter

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of all the granted lands, so that its position in Canada was relatively much stronger than in France.

These lands came from the king or his colonial representatives by royal patent. They were given sometimes in frankalmoigne or sometimes as ordinary seigneuries. The distinction was of little account however, for when land once went into the 'dead hand' it was likely to stay there for all time. The Church and its institutions, as seigneurs of the land, granted farms to habitants on the usual terms, gave them their deeds duly executed by a notary, received their annual dues, and assumed all the responsibilities of a lay seigneur. And as a rule the Church made a good seigneur. Settlers were brought out from France, and a great deal of care was taken in selecting them. They were aided, encouraged, and supported through the trying years of pioneering. As early as 1667 Laval was able to point with pride to the fact that his seigneuries of Beaupré and Isle d'Orleans contained over eleven hundred persons—more than one-quarter of the colony's entire population. These ecclesiastical seigneuries, moreover, were among the best in point of intelligent cultivation. With funds and know-

ledge at its disposal, the Church was better able than the ordinary lay seigneur to provide banal mills and means of communication. These seigneuries were therefore kept in the front rank of agricultural progress, and the example which they set before the eyes of the people must have been of great value.

The seigneurial system was also strengthened by the fact that the boundaries of seigneuries and parishes were usually the same. The chief reason for this is that the parish system was not created until most of the seigneuries had been settled. There were parishes, so-termed, in the colony from the very first; but not until 1722 was the entire colony set off into parish divisions. Forty-one parishes were created in the Quebec district; thirteen in the district of Three Rivers; and twenty-eight in the region round Montreal. These eighty-two parishes were roughly coterminous with the existing seigneuries, but not always so. Some few seigneuries had six or eight parishes within their bounds. In other cases, two or three seigneuries were merged into a single great parish. In the main, however, the two units of civil and spiritual power were alike.

From this identification of the parish and seigneury came some interesting results. The

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seigneurial church became the parish church; where no church had been provided the manor-house was commonly used as a place of worship. Not infrequently the parish curé took up his abode in the seigneur's home and the two grew to be firm friends, each aiding the other with the weight of his own special authority and influence. The whole system of neighbourhood government, as the late Abbé Casgrain once pointed out, was based upon the authority of two men, the curé and the seigneur, 'who walked side by side and extended mutual help to each other. The censitaire, who was at the same time parishioner, had his two rallying-points—the church and the manor-house. The interests of the two were identical.' From this close alliance with the parish the seigneurial system naturally derived a great deal of its strong hold upon the people, for their fidelity to the priest was reflected in loyalty to the seigneur who ranked as his chief local patron and protector.

The people of the seigneuries paid a tithe or ecclesiastical tax for the support of their parish church. In origin, as its name implies, this payment amounted to one-tenth of the land's annual produce; but in New France the tithe was first fixed in 1663 at one-thirteenth,

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but in 1679 this was reduced to one twenty-sixth. At this figure it has remained to the present day. Tithes were at the outset levied on every product of the soil or of the handiwork of man; but in practice they were collected on grain crops only. When the habitants of New France began to raise flax, hemp, and tobacco some of the priests insisted that these products should yield tithes also; but the Superior Council at Quebec ruled against this claim, and the king, on appeal, confirmed the council's decision. The Church collected its dues with strictness; the curés frequently went into the fields and estimated the total crop of each farm, so that they might later judge whether any habitant had held back the Church's due portion. Tithes were usually paid at Michaelmas, everything being delivered to the curé at his own place of abode. When he lived with the seigneur the tithes and seigneurial dues were paid together. But the total of the tithes collected during any year of the old régime was not large. In 1700 they amounted in value to about five thousand livres, a sum which did not support one-tenth of the colony's body of priests. By far the larger part of the necessary funds had to be provided by generous friends of the Church in France.

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Churches were erected in the different seigneuries by funds and labour secured in various ways. Sometimes the bishop obtained money from France, sometimes the seigneur provided it, sometimes the habitants collected it among themselves. More often a part of what was necessary came from each of these three sources. Except in the towns, however, the churches were not pretentious in their architecture, and rarely cost much money. Stone, timber, and other building materials were taken freely from the lands of the seigneury, and the work of construction was usually performed by the parishioners themselves. As a result the edifices were rather ungainly as a rule, being built of rough-hewn timber. In 1681 there were only seven stone churches in all the seigneuries, and the royal officers deplored the fact that the people did not display greater pride or taste in the architecture of their sanctuaries. Bishop Laval felt strongly that this was discreditable, and steadfastly refused to perform the ceremony of consecration in any church which had not been substantially built of stone.

Where a seigneur erected a church at his own expense it was customary to let him have the patronage, or right of naming the priest.

This was an honour which the seigneurs seem to have valued highly. 'Every one here is puffed up with the greatest vanity,' wrote the intendant Duchesneau in 1681; 'there is not one but pretends to be a patron and wants the privilege of naming a curé for his lands, yet they are heavily in debt and in extreme poverty.' None of the great bishops of New France—Laval, St Vallier, or Pontbriand—had much sympathy with this seigneurial right of patronage or advowson, and each did what he could to break down the custom. In the end they succeeded; the bishop named the priest of every parish, although in many cases he sought the seigneur's counsel on such matters.

In the church of his seigneury the lord of the manor continued, however, to have various other prerogatives. For his use a special pew was always provided, and an elaborate decree, issued in 1709, set forth precisely where this pew should be. In religious processions the seigneur was entitled to precedence over all other laymen of the parish, taking his place directly behind the curé. He was the first to receive the tokens of the day on occasions of religious festival, as for example the palms on Palm Sunday. And when he died, the

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seigneur was entitled to interment beneath the floor of the church, a privilege accorded only to men of worldly distinction and unblemished lives. All this recognition impressed the habitants, and they in turn gave their seigneur polite deference. Along the line of travel his carriage or carriole had the right of way, and the habitant doffed his cap in salute as the seigneur drove by. Catalogne mentioned that, despite all this, the Canadian seigneurs were not as ostentatiously given tokens of the habitants' respect as were the seigneurs in France. But this did not mean that the relations between the two classes were any less cordial. It meant only that the clear social atmosphere of the colony had not yet become dimmed by the mists of court duplicity. The habitants of New France respected the horny-handed man in homespun whom they called their seigneur: the depth of this loyalty and respect could not fairly be measured by old-world standards.

As a seigneur of lands the Church had the right to hold courts and administer justice within the bounds of its great estates. Like most lay seigneurs it received its lands with full rights of high, middle, and low jurisdiction (*haute, moyenne, et basse justice*). In its

seigneurial courts fines might be imposed or terms of imprisonment meted out. Even the death penalty might be exacted. Here was a great opportunity for abuse. A very inquisition would have been possible under the broad terms in which the king gave his grant of jurisdiction. Yet the Church in New France never to the slightest degree used its powers of civil jurisdiction to work oppression. As a matter of fact it rarely, if ever, made use of these powers at all. Troubles which arose among the habitants in the Church seigneuries were settled amicably, if possible, by the parish priest. Where the good offices of the priest did not suffice, the disputants were sent off to the nearest royal court. All this is worth comment, for in the earlier days of European feudalism the bishops and abbots held regular courts within the fiefs of the Church. And students of jurisprudence will recall that they succeeded in tincturing the old feudal customs with those principles of the canon law which all churchmen had learned and knew. While ostensibly applying crude mediaeval customs, many of these courts of the Church fiefs were virtually administering a highly developed system of jurisprudence based on the Roman law. Laval might have made history repeat

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itself in Canada; but he had too many other things engaging his attention.

Lay seigneurs, on the other hand, held their courts regularly. And the fact that they did so is of great historical significance, for the right of court-holding rather than the obligation of military service is the earmark which distinguishes feudalism from all other systems of land tenure. Practically every Canadian seigneur had the judicial prerogative; he could establish a court in his seigneury, appoint its judge or judges, impose penalties upon the habitants, and put the fees or costs in his own pocket. In France this was a great source of emolument, and too many seigneurs used their courts to yield income rather than to dispense even-handed justice. But in Canada, owing to the relatively small number of suitors in the seigneuries, the system could not be made to pay its way. Some seigneurs appointed judges who held court once or twice a week. Others tried to save this expense by doing the work themselves. Behind the big table in the main room of his manor-house the seigneur sat in state and meted out justice in rough-and-ready fashion. He was supposed to administer it in true accord with the Custom of Paris; he might as well have been asked to

apply the Code of Hammurabi or the Capitularies of Charlemagne. But if the seigneur did not know the law, he at least knew the disputants, and his decisions were not often wide of the eternal equities. At any rate, if a suitor was not satisfied he could appeal to the royal courts. Only minor cases were dealt with in the seigneurial courts, and the appeals were not numerous.

On the whole, despite its crudeness, the administration of seigneurial justice in New France was satisfactory enough. The habitants, as far as the records show, made no complaint. Justice was prompt and inexpensive. It discouraged chicane and common barratry. Even the sarcastic La Hontan, who had little to say in general praise of the colony and its institutions, accords the judicial system a modest tribute. 'I will not say,' he writes, 'that the Goddess of Justice is more chaste here than in France, but at any rate, if she is sold, she is sold more cheaply. In Canada we do not pass through the clutches of advocates, the talons of attorneys, and the claws of clerks. These vermin do not as yet infest the land. Every one here pleads his own cause. Our Themis is prompt, and she does not bristle with fees, costs, and charges.' The testimony of others,

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though not so rhetorically expressed, is enough to prove that both royal and seigneurial courts did their work in fairly acceptable fashion.

The Norman habitant, as has already been pointed out, was by nature restive, impulsive, and quarrelsome. That he did not make every seigneury a hotbed of petty strife was due largely to the stern hand held over him by priest and seigneur alike, but by his priest particularly. The Church in the colony never lost, as in France, the full confidence of the masses; the higher dignitaries never lost touch with the priest, nor the latter with the people. The clergy of New France did not form a privileged order, living on the fruits of other men's labour. On the contrary, they gave the colony far more than they took from it. Although paid a mere pittance, they never complained of the great physical drudgery that their work too often required. Indeed, if labourers were ever worthy of their hire, such toilers were the spiritual pioneers of France beyond the seas. No one who does not approach their aims and achievements with sympathy can ever fully understand the history of these earlier days. No one who does not appreciate the dominating place which the Church occupied in every walk of colonial life can fully

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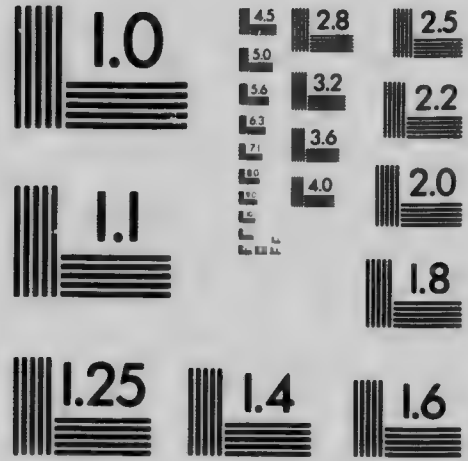

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realize the great help which it gave, both by its active interest and by its example, to the agricultural policy of the civil power. The Church owed much to the seigneurial system, but not more than the system owed to it.

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SAILING CRAFT: 'FIT TO GO FOREIGN'

FROM

ALL AFLOAT

BY

WILLIAM WOOD

BIBLIOTHEQUE

CHAPTER VII

SAILING CRAFT: 'FIT TO GO FOREIGN'

We will suppose that the ship is complete in hull, successfully launched, and properly rigged and masted. The two questions still remaining are: what is her crew like, and how does she sail?

The typical British North American crew of the nineteenth-century sailing ship is the Bluenose crew. Newfoundlanders were too busy fishing in home waters, though some of them did ship to go foreign and others sailed their catch to market. Quebeckers built ships, but rarely sailed them; while the Pacific coast had no shipping to speak of. Thus the Bluenoses had the field pretty well to themselves. Bluenoses were so called because the fog along the Nova Scotian and New Brunswick coast was supposed to make men's noses bluer than it did elsewhere. The name was generally extended by outsiders to all sorts of British North Americans; and, of course, was also applied

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to any vessel, as well as any crew, that hailed from any port in British North America, because a vessel is commonly called by the name of the people that sail her. 'There 's a Bluenose,' 'that 's a Yankee,' 'look at that Dago,' or 'hail that Dutchman' apply to ships afloat as well as to men ashore. And here it might be explained that 'Britisher' includes anything from the British Isles, 'Yankee' anything flying the Stars and Stripes, 'Frenchie' anything hailing from France, 'Dago' anything from Italy, Spain, or Portugal, and 'Dutchman' anything manned by Hollanders, Germans, Norsemen, or Finns, though Norwegians often get their own name too. A 'chequer-board' crew is one that is half white, half black, and works in colour watches.

Hard things have often been said of Bluenose crews. Like other general sayings, some of them are true and some of them false. But, mostly, each of them is partly true and partly false: and—'circumstances alter cases.' The fact is, that life aboard a Bluenose was just what we might expect from crews that lived a comparatively free-and-easy life ashore in a sparsely settled colony, and a very strenuous life afloat in ships which depended, like all ships, on disciplined effort for both success

and safety. When national discipline is not very strong ashore it has to be enforced by hook or by crook afloat. The general public never bothered its head much about seamen's rights or wrongs in a rather 'hard' new country managing its own maritime affairs. So there certainly were occasional 'hell ships' among the Bluenoses, though very rarely except when there were Bluenose officers with a foreign crew.

This was quite in accordance with the practice all along the coast of North America. Even aboard the famous Black Ball Line of Yankee transatlantic packets in the forties there was plenty of 'handspike hash' and 'belaying-pin soup' for shirkers or mutineers. The men before the mast were mostly foreigners and riff-raff Britishers; very few were Yankees or Bluenoses. Discipline had to be maintained; and it was maintained by force. But these were not the real hell ships. 'Hell ships' were commonest among deepwatermen on long voyages round the Horn, or among the whalers when the best class of foremast hands were not to be had. Many of them are much more recent than is generally known; and even now they are not quite extinct. 'Black Taylor,' 'Devil Summers,' and 'Hell-fire

Slocum' are well within living memory. Black Taylor came to a befitting end. Because the rope surged at the capstan he kicked the nearest man down, and was jumping to stamp his ribs in, when the man suddenly whipped out his knife and ripped Black Taylor up with a New Orleans nigger trick-twist for which he got six months, though really deserving none.

But such mates and skippers always were exceptions; and, as a general rule, no better crews and vessels have ever sailed the sea than the Yankees at their prime. Their splendid clippers successfully challenged the slower Britishers on every trade route in the world. At the very time that the *America* was beating British yachts hull-down, the old British East Indiamen were still wallowing along with eighty hands to a thousand tons, while a Yankee thousand-tonner could sail them out of sight with forty. The British excuse was that East Indiamen required a fighting crew as well as a trading one, and that British vessels were built to last, not simply put together to make one flashy record. But after the Napoleonic wars the British Navy could police the world of waters; so double numbers were no longer needed; and if East

Indiamen were built to last, how was it they only went an average of six times out and six times home before being broken up?

Nor was it only in speed that the Yankees were so far ahead. They paid better wages, they gave immeasurably better food, they were smarter to look at and smarter to go, their rigging was tauter, their sails better cut and ever so much flatter on a wind, their cargo more quickly and scientifically stowed, and, most important point of all, their discipline quite excellent. Woe betide the cook or steward whose galley or saloon had a speck of dirt that would make a smudge on the skipper's cleanest cambric handkerchief! It was the same all through, from stem to stern and keel to truck, from foremast hand to skipper. Aboard the best clippers the system was well-nigh perfect. Each man had found, or had the chance of finding, the position for which he was most fit. The best human combination of head and heart and hand was sure to come to the top. The others would also find their own appropriate levels. But shirkers, growlers, flinchers, and mutineers were given short shrift. The officers were game to the death and never hesitated to use handspikes, fists, or firearms whenever the occasion required it.

As for sea-lawyers—the canting equivalent of ranting demagogues ashore—they could hardly have got a hearing among any first-rate crew. No admiralissimo ever was a greater hero to a junior midshipman than the best Yankee skippers were to the men before the mast. There 's no equalitarian nonsense out at sea.

This digression springs from and returns to the main argument; because the Yankee excellence is so little understood and sometimes so grudgingly acknowledged by British and foreign landsmen, and because Bluenose and Yankee circumstances and practice were so much alike. Britishers were different in nearly all their natural circumstances, while, to increase the difference, their practice became greatly modified by a deal of good but sometimes rather lubberly legislation. And yet all three—Britisher, Bluenose, and Yankee—are so inextricably connected with each other that it is quite impossible to understand any one of them without some reference to the other two.

Bluenose discipline was good, very good indeed. When the whole ship's company was Bluenose discipline was partly instinctive and mostly went well, as it generally did when Yankees and Bluenoses sailed together. The whole population of the little home port—

men, women, and children — knew every vessel's crew and all about them. The men were farmers, fishermen, lumbermen, shipbuilders, and 'deepwatermen,' often all in one. Among other peoples, only Scandinavians ever had such an all-round lot as this. Even in the present century, with its increasing multiformity of occupation, books full of nauticalities can be read and understood in these countries by everybody, though such books cannot be read elsewhere except by the seafaring few. Business meant ships or shipping; so did politics, peace and war, adventure and ambition.

But there is a different tale to tell when the tonnage outran the Bluenose ability to man it, and Dutchmen, Dagos, miscellaneous wharf-rats, and 'low-down' Britishers had to be taken on instead. If the crew was mixed and the officers Bluenose there was sure to be trouble of graduated kinds, all the way up from simple knock-downs to the fiercest gun-play of a real hell ship. The food was inferior to that aboard the Yankees. But in discipline there was nothing to choose. An all-Bluenose or all-Yankee sometimes came as near the perfection of seamanship and discipline as anything human possibly can. But aboard a mixed Bluenose the rule of bend or break

was enforced without the slightest reference to what was regarded as landlubber's law. The Britisher's Board of Trade regulations were regarded with contempt; and not without reason; for, excellent as they were, they struck the Bluenose seamen as being an interference made solely in the supposed interests of the men against the officers.

The mistake was that the old injustices were repeated in a new way. Formerly the law either sided with the officers and owners or left them alone; now it either sided with the men or left the officers and owners in the lurch. The true balance was not restored. Here is a thoroughly typical instance of the difference between a Britisher and a Bluenose under the new dispensation. The second mate of a Britisher asked for his discharge at Bombay because he could not manage the men, who had shirked disgracefully the whole way out. The skipper got a good Bluenose for his new second mate. The first day the Bluenose came aboard one of the worst shirkers slung a bucket carelessly, cut the deck, and then proceeded to curse the ship and all who sailed in her, as he had been accustomed to do under the Britisher. The Bluenose mate simply said, 'See here, just shut your head or I 'll

shut it for you,' on which the skulker answered by threatening to 'cut his chicken liver out.' In a flash the Bluenose had him naped, slung, and flying across the rail. A second man rushed in, only to be landed neatly on the chin and knocked limp against the scuppers. The rest of the watch, roused by this unwonted assertion of authority, came on, but stopped short, snarling, when the Bluenose swung an iron bar from the windlass in a way that showed he knew how to handle it effectively. The skipper and mate now appeared, and, seeing a clear case of actual fight, at once ranged themselves beside the capable Bluenose. The watch, a mixed lot, then slunk off; and, from that day out, the whole tone of the ship was changed, very much for the better.

It is pleasanter, however, to take our last look at a Bluenose vessel, under sail, with Bluenose skipper, mates, and crew, and a Bluenose cargo, all complete. But a word must first be said about other parts and other craft, lest the Maritime-Province Bluenose might be thought the only kind of any consequence. There were, and still are, swarms of small craft in Canada and Newfoundland which belong mostly or entirely to the fisheries, and which, therefore, will be noticed in another

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chapter. The schooners along the different coasts, up the lower St Lawrence, and round the Lakes; the modern French-Canadian sailing bateaux; the transatlantic English brigs that still come out to Labrador; the many Britishers and Yankees that used to come to Bluenose harbours and to Quebec; the foreigners that come there still; and the host of various miscellaneous little vessels everywhere—all these are by no means forgotten. But only one main thread of the whole historic yarn can be followed here.

Before starting we might perhaps remember what a sailing vessel cannot do, as well as what she can, when the proper men are there and circumstances suit her. She is helpless in a calm. She needs a tow in crowded modern harbours or canals. She can only work against the wind in a laborious zigzag, and a very bad gale generally puts her considerably off her course. But, on the other hand, she could beat all her best records under perfect modern conditions of canvas, scientific metal hull, and crew; and the historic records she actually has made are quite as surprising as they are little known. Few people realize that 'ocean records' are a very old affair, even in Canada, where they begin with Champlain's voyage of

eighteen days from Honfleur to Tadoussac and end with King George V's sixty-seven hours from land to land, when he speeded home in H.M.S. *Indomitable* from Champlain's tercentenary at Quebec in 1908, handling his shovel in the stokehole by the way.

Here are some purely sailing records worth remembering. A Newfoundland schooner, the *Grace Carter*, has sailed across to Portugal, sold her fish there, gone to Cadiz for all the salt that she could carry, and then reported back in Newfoundland within the month. A Canadian schooner yacht, the *Lasca*, has crossed easterly, the harder way, in twelve days from the St Lawrence. In 1860 the Yankee *Dreadnought* made the Atlantic record by going from Sandy Hook to Liverpool in nine days and seventeen hours, most of the time on the rim of a hurricane. Six years later the most wonderful sea race in history was run when five famous clippers started, almost together, from the Pagoda Anchorage at Fu-chau for the East India Docks in London. This race was an all-British one, as the civil war, the progress of steam everywhere except in the China trade, and the stimulus of competition, had now given Britishers the lead in the East, while putting them on an even footing with Yankees in the

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West. The course was sixteen thousand miles; the prize was the world's championship in clipper-racing. Three ships dropped considerably astern. But the *Ariel* and *Taeping* raced up the Channel side by side, took in their pilots at the same time, and arrived within eight minutes of each other. The *Ariel* arrived first; but the *Taeping* won, as she had left twenty minutes later. The total time was ninety-nine days. A very different, but still more striking, record is the longest daily run ever made entirely under sail. This was, in one sense at least, an Anglo-American record; for the ship, appropriately called the *Lightning*, was built by that master craftsman, Donald M'Kay of Boston, and sailed by a British crew. She made no less than 436 sea miles, or 502 statute miles, within the twenty-four hours.

There are no individual Bluenose rivals of these mighty champions. But the Bluenoses more than held their own, all round, in any company and on any sea. So it is well worth our while to end this story of a thousand years—from the Vikings till to-day—by going aboard a Bluenose vessel with a Bluenose crew when both were at their prime.

The *Victoria* is manned by the husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers of the place where

she was built. Her owners are the leaders of the little neighbourhood, and her cargo is home-grown. She carries no special carpenter and sailmaker, like a Britisher, because a Bluenose has an all-round crew, every man of which is smart enough, either with the tools or with the fid and palm and needle, for ordinary work, while some are sure to be equal to any special job. She of course carries two suits of canvas, her new best and older second best. Each sail has required more skill than tailors need to make a perfect fit in clothes, because there is a constant strain on sails, exceeding, if possible, the strains on every other part. But before sail is made her anchor is hove short, that is, the ship is drawn along by her cable till her bows are over it. 'Heave and she comes!' 'Heave and she must!' 'Heave and bust her!' are grunted from the men straining at the longbars of the capstan, which winds the tightening cable in. 'Click, click, clickety, click' go the pawls, which drop every few inches into cavities that, keeping them from slipping back, prevent the capstan from turning the wrong way when the men pause to take breath. 'Break out the mud-hook!' and a tremendous combined effort ensues. Presently a sudden welcome slack

shows that the flukes have broken clear. The anchor is then hove up, catted, and fished.

'All hands make sail!' sings out the mate. The wind is nicely on the starboard quarter, that is, abaft the beam and forward of the stern, which gives the best chance to every sail. A wind dead aft, blanketing more than half the canvas, is called a lubber's wind. A soldier's wind is one which comes square on the beam, and so makes equally plain sailing out and back again. What sail a full-rigged ship can carry! The Yankee *Great Republic* could spread nearly one whole acre of canvas to the breeze. Another Yankee, the *R. C. Rickmers*, the largest sailing vessel in the world to-day, exceeds this. But her tonnage is much greater, more than eleven thousand gross, and her rig is entirely different. A full-rigged clipper ship might have twenty-two square sails, though it was rare to see so many. In addition she would have studding-sails to wing her square sails farther out. Then, there were the triangular jibs forward and the triangular staysails between the masts, with the quadrangular spanker like an aerial rudder on the lower mizzenmast. All the nine staysails would have the loose lower corner made fast to a handy place on deck by a sheet

(or rope) and the fore and aft points connected by the stays to the masts, the fore point low and the aft high. This is not the nautical way of saying it. But 'points' and 'corners' and other homely land terms sometimes save many explanations which, in their turn, lead on to other explanations.

The heads of square sails are made fast to yards, which are at right angles to the masts on which they pivot. Sails and yards are raised, lowered, swung at the proper angle to catch the wind, and held in place by halliards, lifts, braces, and sheets, which can be worked from the deck. Sheets are ropes running from the lower corners of sails. All upper sails have their sheets running through sheave-holes in the yardarms next below, then through quarter-blocks underneath these yards and beside the masts, and then down to the deck. Braces are the ropes which swing the yards to the proper angle. Halliards are those which hoist or lower both the yards and sails. The square sails themselves are controlled by drawlines called clew-garnets running up from the lower corners, leechlines running in diagonally from the middle of the outside edges, buntlines running up from the foot, and spilling lines, to spill the wind in heavy

weather. When the area of a sail has to be reduced, it is reefed by gathering up the head, if a square sail, or the foot, if triangular, and tying the gathered-up part securely by reef points, that is, by crossing and knotting the short lines on either side of this part. The square sails on the mainmast are called, when eight are carried, the mainsail, lower and upper maintopsails, lower and upper maintopgallants, main-royal, main-skysail, and the moonsail. The standing rigging is the whole assemblage of ropes by which the masts are supported.

These few words are very far from being a technically full, or even quite precise, description. But, taken with what was previously said about the hull, they will give a better general idea than if the reader was asked to make a realizable whole out of a mazy bewilderment embracing every single one of all the multitudinous parts.

'All hands make sail!' Up go some to loose the sails aloft, while others stay on deck to haul the ropes that hoist the sails to the utmost limit of the canvas. The jibs and spanker generally go up at once, because they are useful as an aid to steering. The staysails generally wait. The jibs and staysails are triangular, the spanker a quadrangular fore-

and-after. The square sails made fast to wide-spreading yards are the ones that take most hauling. But setting the sails by no means ends the work at them. Trimming is quite as important. Every time there is the slightest shift in the course or wind there ought to be a corresponding shift of trim so as to catch every breath the sail can hold. To effect this with the triangular sails a sheet must be slacked away or hauled more in; while, in the case of the square sails on the yards, a brace must be attended to.

Our Bluenose mate now thinks he can get more work from his canvas. His voice rings out: 'Weather crossjack brace!' which means hauling the lowest and aftermost square sail more to windward. 'Weather crossjack brace!' sings out the timekeeper, whose duty it is to rouse the watch as well as strike the bells that mark the hours and halves. The watch tramp off and lay on to the weather brace, the A.B.'s (or able-bodied seamen) leading and the O.S.'s (ordinary seamen) at the tail. Some one slacks off the lee braces and sings out 'Haul away!' Then the watch proceed to haul, with weird, wild cries in minor keys that rise and fall and rise again, like the long-drawn soughing of the wind itself. *Eh*—

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heigh—o—ai! Eh—heigh—ee! Eh—hugh! In comes the brace till the trim suits the mate, when he calls out 'Turn the crossjack brace!' which means making it fast on a belaying pin. The other braces follow. By the time the top-gallant braces are reached only two hands are needed, as the higher yards are naturally much lighter than the lower ones.

Sheets and braces are very dangerous things to handle in a gale of wind. Every movement of the rope must be closely watched with one vigilant eye, while the other must be looking out for washing seas. The slightest inattention to the belaying of a mainsheet while men are hanging on may mean that it breaks loose just as the men expect it to be fast, when away it goes, with awful suddenness and force, dragging them clean overboard before their instinctive grip can be let go. The slightest inattention to the seas may mean an equally fatal result. Not once, nor twice, but several times, a whole watch has been washed away from the fore-braces by some gigantic wave, and every single man in it been drowned.

Squalls need smart handling. Black squalls are nothing, even when the ship lays over till the lee rail's under a sluicing rush of broken water. But a really wicked white squall

requires luffing, that is, bringing her head so close to the wind that it will strike her at the acutest angle possible without losing its pressure in the right direction altogether. The officer of the watch keeps one eye to windward, makes up his mind what sail he 'll shorten, and then yells an order that pierces the wind like a shot, 'Stand by your royal halliards!' As the squall swoops down and the ship heels over to it he yells again, 'Let go your royal halliards, clew 'em up and make 'em fast!' Down come the yards, with hoarse roaring from the thrashing canvas. But then, if no second squall is coming, the mate will cut the clewing short with a stentorian 'Masthead the yards again!' on which the watch lay on to the halliards and haul—*Ahay! Aheigh! Aho—oh!* Up she goes!

The labour is lightened, as hand labour always has been lightened, by singing to the rhythm of the work. The seaman's working songs are chanties, a kind of homespun poetry which, once heard to its rolling music and the sound of wind and wave, will always bring back the very savour of the sea wherever it is heard again. There are thousands of chanties in scores of languages, which, like the men who sing them, have met and mingled all round the

world. They are the folklore of a class apart, which differs, as landsmen differ, in ways and speech and racial ambition, but which is also drawn together, as landsmen never have been, by that strange blend of strife and communing with man and nature which is only known at sea. They will not bear quotation in cold print, where they are as pitiably out of place as an albatross on deck. No mere reader can feel the stir of that grand old chanty

Hurrah! my boys, we're homeward bound!

unless he has heard it when all hands make sail on leaving port, and the deck begins pulsating with the first throb of the swell that sets in landward across the bar. And what can this chorus really mean to any one who has never heard it roared by strong male voices to the running accompaniment of seething water overside?

What ho, Piper! watch her how she goes!
Give her sheet and let her rip.
We're the boys to pull her through.
You ought to see her rolling home;
For she's the gal to go
In the passage home in ninety days
From Cal-i-for-ni-o!

But though you can no more wrest a chanty from its surroundings and then pass it off as a

seaman's folk-song than you can take the blue from the water or the crimson from the sunset, yet, as some chanties have become so well known ashore, as others so richly deserve to be known there, and as all are now being threatened with extinction, perhaps a few may be mentioned in passing. *Away for Rio!* with its wild, queer wail in the middle of its full-toned chorus, has always been a great favourite afloat:

For we 're bound for Rio Grande,
And away Rio! ay Rio!
Sing fare-ye-well, my bonny young girl,
We 're bound for Rio Grande.

The *Wide Missouri* is a magnificent song for baritones and basses on the water:

Oh, Shenando'h, I love your daughter,
'Way-ho, the rolling river!
Oh, Shenando'h, I long to hear you,
'Way-ho, we 're bound away,
Down the broad Missouri.

A famous capstan chanty is well known on land, whence, indeed, it originally came:

And it 's hame, dearie, hame; oh! it 's hame I want to be.
My topsails are hoisted and I must out to sea;
But the oak and the ash and the bonnie birchen tree,
They 're all a-growin' green in the North Countree.

—which is quite as appropriate to the *Nova*

Scotia as to the one beyond the North Atlantic. A favourite sail-setting chanty is

Solo. Haul on the bowlin', the fore and maintop bowlin'—
Chorus. Haul on the bowlin', the bowlin' haul!

A good pumping-out chanty after a storm is

Solo. Old Storm has heard the angel call.
Chorus. To my ay! Old Storm along!

Reuben Ranzo is a grand one for a good long haul. The chorus comes after every line, striking like a squall, with a regular roar on the first word, Ranzo.

Solo. Hurrah for Reuben Ranzo!
Chorus. Ranzo, boys, Ranzo!

Ranzo's progress from a lubberly tailor to a good smart sailor is then related with infinite variations, but always with the same gusto. *Ranzo* is only really popular afloat. But *Blow the man down* is a universal favourite.

Solo. Blow the man down, blow the man down,
Chorus. 'Way-ho! Blow the man down.
Solo. Blow the man down from Liverpool town;
Chorus. Give us some wind to blow the man down.

When every sail is set and every stitch is drawing, there is no finer sight the sea can show. The towering masts; the canvas gleaming white, with its lines of curving

beauty drawn by the touch of the wind; the whole ship bounding forward as if just slipped from her leash—all this makes a scene to stir the beholder then and for ever after. The breeze pipes up. She 's doing ten knots now; eleven, twelve; and later on, fifteen. This puts the lee rail under; for she lays over on her side so far that her deck is at a slope of forty-five. Her forefoot cuts through the water like the slash of a scimitar; while her bows throw out two seething waves, the windward one of which breaks into volleying spray a-top and rattles down like hailstones on the fore-deck.

But next day the wind has hauled ahead, and she has to make her way by tacking. She loses as little as possible on her zigzag course by sailing close to the wind, that is, by pointing as nearly into it as she can while still 'keeping a full on' every working sail. Presently the skipper, having gone as far to one side of his straight course as he thinks proper, gives the caution; whereupon the braces are taken off the pins and coiled down on deck, all clear for running, while the spanker-boom is hauled in amidships so that the spanker may feel the wind and press the stern a-lee, which helps the bow to windward. Then the 'old man' (called

so whatever his age may be) sings out at the top of his voice, 'Ready, oh!' The helm is eased down on his signal, so as not to lose way suddenly. When it is quite down he shouts again, 'Helm's a-lee!' on which the fore and head sheets (holding the sails attached to the foremast and bowsprit) are let go and overhauled. The vessel swings round, the spanker pressing her stern in one direction and the sails at the bows offering very little resistance now their sheets are let go. The skipper's eye is on the mainsail, which is the point of pivoting. Directly the wind is out of it and it begins to shiver he yells, 'Raise tacks and sheets!' when, except that the foretack is held a bit to prevent the foresail from bellying aback, all the remaining ropes that held the ship on her old tack are loosed. A roar of wind-waves rushes through the sails, and a tremor runs through the whole ship from stem to stern. The skipper waits for the first decided breath on her new tack and then shouts, 'Mainsail haul!' when the yards come swinging round so quickly that the men can hardly take in the slack of the braces fast enough. The scene of orderly confusion is now at its height. Every one hauling sings out at the very top of his pipes. The sails are struggling to find their

new set home; while the headsheets forward thrash about like mad and thump their blocks against the deck with force enough to dash your brains out.

Mates and boatswain work furiously, for the skipper's eye is searching everywhere, and the skipper's angry words cut the delinquent like the lash of a well-aimed whip. The boatswain forward has the worst of it, for the restive sheets and headsails won't come to trim without a fight when it 's breezing up and seas are running. But presently all the yards get rightly trimmed, tacks boarded, and bowlines hauled out taut. She 's on a bowline taut enough to please the old man now; that is, the ropes leading forward from the middle of the forward edge of every square sail are so straight that she is sailing as near the wind as she can go and keep a full on. 'Go below, the watch!' and the men off duty tramp down, the cook and boatswain with their 'oilies' streaming from their scuffle with the flying spray and slapping dollops at the bows.

When a quartering trade wind is picked up sailing is at its easiest; for a well-balanced suit of canvas will keep her bowling along night and day with just the lightest of touches at the wheel. Then is the time to bend her old sails

on; for, unlike a man, a ship puts on her old suit for fair weather and her new suit for foul. Then, too, is the time for dog-watch yarning, when pipes are lit without any fear of their having to be crammed half-smoked into the nearest pocket because all hands are called. Landsmen generally think that most watches aboard a wind-jammer are passed in yarns and smoking. But this is far from being the case. The mates and skipper keep everybody busy with the hundred-and-one things required to keep a vessel shipshape: painting, graining, brightening, overhauling the weak spots in the rigging, working the 'bear' to clean the deck with fine wet sand, helping whomever is acting as 'Chips' the carpenter, or the equally busy 'Sails'; or 'doing Peggy' for 'Slush' the cook, who much prefers wet grub to dry, slumgullion coffee to any kind of tea, ready-made hard bread to ship-baked soft, and any kind of stodge to the toothsome delights of dandyfunk and crackerhash. And all this is extra to the regular routine, with its lamp-lockers, binnacles, timekeeping, incessant look-out, and trick at the wheel. Besides, every man has to look after his own kit, which he has to buy with his own money, and his quarters, for which he alone is responsible.

So there is never much time to spare, with watch and watch about, all through the voyage; especially when all the ills that badly fed flesh is heir to on board a deepwaterman incapacitate some hands, while falls from aloft and various accidents knock out others.

The skipper, boatswain, cook, steward, Chips, and Sails keep no watches, and hence are called 'the idlers,' a most misleading term, for they work a good deal harder than their counterparts ashore; though the mates and seamen often work harder still. There are seven watches in a day, reckoned from noon to noon: five of four hours each and two of two hours each. These two, the dog watches, are from four to six and six to eight each afternoon. The crew are divided into port and starboard watches, each under a mate. In Bluenose vessels the port watch was always called by the old name of larboard watch till only the other day. The starboard and larboard got their names because the starboard was the side on which the steering oar was hung before the rudder was invented, and the larboard was the side where the lading or cargo came in.

Bluenoses have no use for nippers, as Britishers call apprentices. But if they had,

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and the reader was a green one, he would just about begin to know the ropes and find his sea legs by the time that our *Victoria* had run her southing down to within another day's sail of the foul-weather zone in the roaring forties round the Horn, which seamen call 'Old Stiff.' Sails are shifted again, and the best new suit is bent; for the coming gales have a clear sweep from the Antarctic to the stormiest coast of all America, and the enormous, grey-backed Cape Horners are the biggest seas in the world.

The best helmsmen are on duty now. Not even every Bluenose can steer, any more than every Englishman can box or every Frenchman fence. There are a dozen different ways of mishandling a vessel under sail. Let your attention wander, and she 'll run up into the wind and perhaps get in irons, so that she won't cast either way. Let her fall off when you 're running free, and she 'll broach to and get taken aback. Or simply let her yaw about a bit instead of holding true, and you 'll lose a knot or two an hour. But do none of these careless things, observe all the rules as well, and even then you will never make a helmsman unless it 's born in you. Steering is blown into you by the wind and soaked into you by the water. And you must also have

that inborn faculty of touch which tells you instinctively how to meet a vessel's vagaries—and no two vessels are alike—as well as how to make her fall in with all the humours of a wayward ocean.

The hungry great Antarctic wind comes swooping down. The *Victoria* lays over to it, her forefoot slashing, her lee side hissing, the windward rigging strained and screaming, and every stitch of canvas drawing full. Still the skipper carries on. He and his vessel have a name to keep up; and he has carried on till all was blue ere this, and left more than one steam kettle panting. Every timber, plank, mast, yard, and tackle wakes to new life and thrills in response to the sails. She answers her helm quickly, eagerly. She rides the galloping waters now as you ride her. And as she rises to each fresh wave you also rise, with the same exultant spring, and take the leap in your stride.

The wind pipes up a regular gale is evidently brewing; and most of the canvas must come off her now or else she 'll soon be stripped of it. 'Stand by your royal halliards!' yells the second mate. 'Let go your royal halliards!' The royals are down for good. The skysails have been taken in before. Another tre-

mendous blast lays her far over, and the sea is a lather of foam to windward. The skipper comes on deck, takes a quick look round, and shouts at the full pitch of his lungs: 'All hands shorten sail!' Up come the other watch in their oilskins, which they have carefully lashed round their wrists and above their knees to keep the water out. Taking in sail is no easy matter now. Every one tails on, puts his back into it, and joins the chorus of the hard-breathed chanty. The human voices sound like fitful screams of seabirds, heard in wild snatches between the volleying gusts; while overhead the sails are booming like artillery, as the spilling lines strain to get the grip. 'Now then, starboard watch, up with your sail and give the larboard watch a dressing down!' *Yo—ho! Yo—hay! Yo—ho—oh!* Up she goes! A hiss, a crash, a deafening thud, and a gigantic wave curls overhead and batters down the toiling men, who hang on for their lives and struggle for a foothold. 'Up with you!' yells the mate, directly the tangled coil of yellow-clad humanity emerges like a half-drowned rat, 'Up with you, boys, and give her hell!' *Yo—ho! Yo—hay! Yo—ho—harrhh!* 'Turn that!' 'All fast, sir!' 'Aloft and roll her up! Now then, starbowlines, show

your spunk!' Away they go, the mate dashing ahead; while the furious seas shoot up vindictive tongues at them and nearly wash two men clean off the rigging on a level with the lower topsails. Out on the swaying yard, standing on the foot-rope that is strung underneath, they grasp at the hard, wet, struggling canvas till they can pass the gaskets round the parts still bellying between the buntlines. 'One hand for the ship and one for yourself' is the rule aloft. But exceptions are more plentiful than rules on a day like this. Both hands must be used, though the sail and foot-ropes rack your body and try their best to shake you off. If they succeed, a sickening thud on deck, or a smothered scream and a half-heard *plopp!* overside would be the end of you.

All hands work like fury, for a full Antarctic hurricane is on them. This great South Polar storm has swept a thousand leagues, almost unchecked, before venting its utmost rage against the iron coasts all round the Horn. The South Shetlands have only served to rouse its temper. Its seas have grown bigger with every mile from the Pole, and wilder with every mile towards the Horn. Now they are so enormous that even the truck of the tall Yankee clipper staggering along to

leeward cannot be seen except when both ships are topping the crest. Wherever you look there seems to be an endless earthquake of mountainous waves, with spuming volcanoes of their own, and vast, abysmal craters yawning from the depths. The *Victoria* begins to labour. The wind and water seem to be gaining on her every minute. She groans in every part of her sorely racked hull; while up aloft the hurricane roars, rings, and screeches through the rigging.

But suddenly there is a new and far more awful sound, which seems to still all others, as a stupendous mother wave rears its huge, engulfing bulk astern. On it comes, faster and higher, its cavernous hollow roaring and its overtopping crest snarling viciously as it turns forward, high above the poop. 'Hold on for your lives!' shout the mates and skipper. They are not a moment too soon. The sails are blanketed, and the ship seems as if she was actually being drawn, stern first, into the very jaws of the sea. A shuddering pause . . . and then, with a stunning crash, the whole devouring mass bursts full on deck. The stricken *Victoria* reels under the terrific shock, and then lies dead another anxious minute, utterly helpless, her

deck awash with a smother of foaming water, and her crew apparently drowned. But presently her stern emerges through the dark, green-grey after-shoulder of the wave. She responds to the lift of the mighty barrel with a gallant effort to shake herself free. She rises, dripping from stem to stern. Her sails refill and draw her on again. And when the next wave comes she is just able to take it—but no more.

The skipper has already decided to heave to and wait for the storm to blow itself out. But there is still too much canvas on her. Even the main lower topsail has to come in. The courses, or lowest square sails, have all come in before. The little canvas required for lying to must neither be too high nor yet too low. If it is too high, it gives the wind a very dangerous degree of leverage. If it is too low, it violently strains the whole vessel by being completely blanketed when in the trough of the sea and then suddenly struck full when on the crest. The main lower topsail is at just the proper height. But only the fore and mizzen ones are wanted to balance the pressure aloft. So in it has to come. And a dangerous bit of work it gives; for it has to be hauled up from right amidships, where the deck is wetter than a

half-tide rock. The yellow-oilskinned crew tail on and heave. *Yo—ho! Yo—hay!* 'Hitch it! Quick, for your lives, hang on, all!' A mountainous wall of black water suddenly leaps up and crashes through the windward rigging. The watch goes down to a man, some hanging on to the rope as if suspended in the middle of a waterfall, for the deck is nearly perpendicular, while others wash off altogether and fetch up with a dazing, underwater thud against the lee side. Inch by inch the men haul in, waist-deep most of the time and often completely under. *Yo—ho! Yo—hay! harrhh,* and they all hold breath till they can get their heads out again. *Yo—ho! Yo—hay!* 'In with her!' *Heigh—o—oh!* 'Turn that!' 'All fast!'

''Way aloft and r· ıer up quick!' The tossing crests are blown into spindrift against the weather yardarm, while a pelting hailstorm stings the wet, cold hands and faces. The men tear at the sail with their numb fingers till their nails are bleeding. They hit it, pull it, clutch at it for support. Certain death would follow a fall from aloft; for the whole deck is hidden under a surging, seething mass of water. You would swear the water 's boiling if it wasn't icy cold. The skipper 's at the wheel, watching his

chance. There is no such thing as a good chance now. But he sees one of some kind, just as the men get the sail on the yard and are trying to make it fast. Down goes the helm, and her head comes slowly up to the wind. 'She 's doing it—— No! Hang on, all! Great snakes, here comes a sea!' Struck full, straight on her beam, by wind and sea together, the *Victoria* lays over as if she would never stop. Over she heels to it—over, over, over! A second is a long suspense at such a time as this. The sea breaks in thunder along her whole length, and pours in a sweeping cataract across her deck, smashing the boats and dragging all loose gear to leeward. Over she heels—over, over, over! The yards are nearly up and down. The men cling desperately, as if to an inverted mast. And well they may, especially on the leeward arm that dips them far under a surge of water which seems likely to snap the whole thing off. But the *Victoria's* cargo and ballast never shift an inch. Her stability is excellent. And as the heaving shoulder eases down she holds her keel in, just before another lurch would send her turning turtle. A pause . . . a quiver . . . and she begins to right. 'Now then,' roars the indomitable mate, the moment his dripping

yardarm comes from under, 'turn to, there—d' y' think we 're going to hang on here the whole damn' day ?' Whereupon the men turn to again with twice the confidence and hearty goodwill that any other form of reassurance could possibly have given them.

As she comes back towards an even keel the wind catches the sails. The skipper is still at the wheel, to which he and the two men whose trick it is are clinging. 'Hard-a-lee !' and round she goes this time, till she snuggles into a good lie-to, which keeps her alternately coming up and falling off a little, by the counteraction of the sails and helm. Here she rides out the storm, dipping her lee rail under, climbing the wild, gigantic seas, and working off her course on the cyclone-driven waters; but giving watch and watch about a chance to rest before she squares away again.

Next morning the skipper hardly puts his head out before he yells the welcome order to set the main lower topsail—from the lee yardarm of which a dozen men had nearly gone to Davy Jones's locker only yesterday. He takes a look round; then orders up reefed foresail and the three upper topsails, also reefed. Up goes the watch aloft and lays out on the yard. 'Ready ?' comes the shouted

query from the bunt. 'Ay, ay, sir!' 'Haul out to windward!' *Eh—hai, o—ho, o—ho—oh!* 'Far enough, sir?' 'Haul out to leeward!' *Eh—hai, o—ho, o—ho—oh!* 'That'll do! Tie her up and don't miss any points!' 'Right-oh! Lay down from aloft and set the sail!' *Yo—ho, yo—hai, yo—ho—oh!* Then the chanty rises from the swaying men, rises and falls, in wavering bursts of sound, as if the gale was whirling it about:

Blow the man down, blow the man down,
'Way-ho! Blow the man down.
Blow the man down from Liverpool town;
Give us some wind to blow the man down.

And so the gallant ship goes outward-bound; and homeward-bound the same. At last she's back in Halifax, after a series of adventures that would set an ordinary landsman up for life. But the only thing the Nova Scotian papers say of her is this: 'Arrived from sea with general cargo—ship *Victoria*, John Smith, master, ninety days from Valparaiso. All well.'

No mention of that terrible Antarctic hurricane? No 'heroes'? No heroics?

It 's all in the day's work there.

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